



A SORCERER'S JOURNEY

BOOK 01

Flying White Egrets

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A Sorcerer's Journey

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by

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Synopsis

Sorcerer Continent—a world where sorcerers exist.

Wielders of arcane knowledge.

Masters of all elements. Sovereigns of space and time.

These sorcerers governed the world with their unrivalled prowess.

One day, a young man awakened into this world with his past forgotten and no place to call home.

Follow along as Glenn, by relying on his luck and wit, tries to survive and advance in this unforgiving world.

Entangled within the machinations of fate, political schemes, power struggles and wars, he forges his own path and creates a place for himself.

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Chapter 1: The World of Sorcerers

“Bang! Bang! Bang!” Three sharp knocks sounded on a thick wooden door.

Within the thatched house, lying under his worn-out quilts, Glenn was pulled out of his sleep with a start. The numbing coldness made him gulp. Without any further delay, he called out at the door, “Coming.”

Ignoring his frozen feet, he quickly threw on some ragged clothes. He then snatched a coat from his bed, which served as his second quilt and answered the door. He shuddered the moment he opened the door as the chilling winter winds filled with ice chippings struck against him.

At the door stood a horse-drawn coach and Old Ham was sitting on it. He had curled himself up into a tight ball at the time and was smoking a pipe with one hand and had a whip in the other. Two long furrows left behind by the coach could be seen on the snow-coated road.

“Come on, it’s a bumpy road. We’re gonna get punished for being late.” Old Ham puffed deeply on his pipe and grumbled.

“In a second.” Glenn locked the wooden door and adroitly climbed into the coach. Ever since Glenn had landed this regular job with Old Ham, the grievance of “come on, it’s a bumpy road” had never ceased to follow him, and he had grown accustomed to it.

Without adding another word, Old Ham took another puff of his pipe and whipped the horse with great force. The old horse snorted and proceeded on its journey in the pothole-ridden snowfield.

While looking up at the dim and gray sky, Glenn reposed himself against the rail on one side of the coach and nodded off. Based on his previous commutes, he knew that it would take more than half

an hour of time to get to the Zi Jue Residence in this snowy weather and by then, it would be nearly dawn.

Glenn felt a sense of familiarity with the smell of the tobacco that Old Ham was smoking and was grateful for Old Ham's help. Glenn's oldest memory was of himself in Bi Seer City during a blizzard. He could not remember anything prior to that day, and no one knew him; it was as if he had come from a different world. From that day on, he loafed around with a bunch of orphans in the city, while his begging could barely satisfy his hunger, until the childless Old Ham had met and adopted him, thinking of him as a boy of intelligence.

Old Ham chuckled. "When I die, the house and this horse would be yours." Truth be told, the two-roomed thatched house in the countryside and this old horse would not be worth a dime, but it still reinforced Glenn's gratitude toward the old man beside him.

The business they were engaged in was to go to the Zi Jue Residence and clean up the considerable amount of leftovers and other waste produced from the binge drinking and eating of the nobles at the residence from the night before. They were asked to complete the cleaning by dawn, dispose of the trash outside of the city and purchase supplies for that evening's carnival. The commute would take almost a day.

About half an hour later, sounds of clip-clopping were heard as the horse trod onto a smooth pavement. The drowsy Glenn woke up to the sounds of the horse's hooves, sparing the old man from having to wake him up. Knowing that he had been in Bi Seer City and would soon be at the Zi Jue Residence, Glenn shook the snow off his coat, in an effort to make himself look less sloppy.

To dress up would make no difference, though. Most of the nobles at the feast had already fallen asleep by the time Glenn and Old Ham arrived at the Residence in the early morning. For the one or two nobles who were still awake, they would not lower their head and bother to look at the two lousy servants.

The old butler of the residence, however, was someone hard to deal with. He ripped off Old Ham, Glenn and the other servants regularly, and his lame excuse for taking bribes from them was for their sloppiness; not to mention he'd used the excuse more than once.

At the front entrance of the residence, two large guards, who must have been exhausted from standing all night, were nodding off. They came around from their sleep on hearing a neigh of a horse. They then swept a look over Old Ham and Glenn who were on the coach. The two guards could not be more familiar with their faces after years of encounters, and they just ignored them.

Old Ham smiled deferentially to the two guards and jumped off the coach, and Glenn followed him closely. Both of them kept their heads low when crossing the gateway and going all the way toward the luxurious sitting room where they would do their usual cleaning.

The languid Old Ham and Glenn felt a different atmosphere in the place that day. They saw the butler standing in anxiety at the entrance of the sitting room. The butler threw a vicious glance at Old Ham and Glenn with his triangle-shaped eyes as he saw them. He then trotted up to them and snapped in a hushed voice, "Stay here! Don't listen! Don't talk!"

"Okay, Okay," they replied quickly.

The sounds of a fight were then vaguely heard coming from the sitting room. Old Ham and Glenn could discern that a girl was causing a disturbance and without thinking, they speculated that she must be a girl of high birth. Nearly half an hour had passed and it was already broad daylight. Yet it was still bitterly cold and Old Ham and Glenn were shivering. They stomped their feet in the snow-covered yard to try to keep them from being frozen.

The gloomy butler at one side of the sitting-room entrance stepped down to them.

“If you can’t bear the weather, then don’t come tomorrow.”

The faces of Old Ham and Glenn darkened. Old Ham pulled out a silver coin out of his ragged linen coat and slipped it into the butler’s hand. “We can stand the weather. We can.”

“Humph.”

The old butler dexterously plunged the coin into his pocket and left them alone. He then returned to the entrance, looking in restlessly from time to time.

Glenn couldn’t help murmuring to Old Ham, “He fleeced us days ago and he is doing it again.”

“Endure! This job is craved by many, and he wanted us to quit.” Old Ham heaved a sigh. “As people age or near the final days of their lives, they begin to see things clearly and they no longer have the hot-bloodedness of youth.”

At the moment, a girl in fancy attire ran out of the sitting room, crying. The girl suddenly stopped at the side of Old Ham. She then turned around and shouted back at the room.

“No way am I going to the Lilith School of Sorcerers, nor will I be a sorcerer, ever!” Her anger was not yet abated; she threw a book on the ground and raced out of the Zi Jue Residence.

“You little rebel!” A nobleman with a bulging belly followed her out.

“What are you staring at?! Go get her back!” The nobleman’s face turned red because of his wrath and howled at the two armored guards beside him.

What surprised Old Ham was the deference of Lord Zi Jue, master of the Zi Jue Residence. He was standing next to the nobleman and was showing a miserable expression. He then said something in a faint voice to the nobleman.

“What does she know? Sorcerers rule the world. God knows how

much I have done for her sorcery test, and it is due in six months,” the nobleman refuted.

Lord Zi Jue followed the nobleman out of the residence in a great flurry to chase the little girl. The old butler, similarly agitated, followed on the heels of the nobleman and Lord Zi Jue while calling the guards at the entrance to tag along. Nobody ever paid any attention to the existence of Old Ham and Glenn.

In the blink of an eye, the yard had become silent and empty.

Looking back and forth to make sure that no one was around, Glenn was about to pick up the book thrown on the ground by the little girl, but he was stopped by Old Ham, who had hurried up to him in one big step and slapped Glenn in his hand.

“You wanna get yourself killed?”

“I think it’s all right. If we were ever asked about this, we would say that we have disposed of it as garbage. That noble girl threw it away.” Glenn grimaced at the pain in his hand.

Old Ham gave it some more thought, and after making sure that there was nobody around, he acquiesced with a nod.

Glenn then lodged the book in his coat and began to help Old Ham clearing the waste in the sitting room and loaded them, as usual, into the wagon that was bridled onto the horse, pretending that nothing had ever happened. Nobody asked about the book during the process, for which Glenn was relieved. They often found things in the garbage, things they treasured that, in the nobles' eyes, were of no value.

The cleaning and loading finished, Old Ham and Glenn mounted the carriage and drove the horse along without any haste. On a coach brimful of garbage, Glenn’s sleepiness had dissipated.

He then rushed to take the book out and had a quick look at it. But he frowned. People like Glenn, who had slaved a lifetime for noblemen, couldn’t read. Fortunately, Old Ham had gained

literacy when he was learning book-keeping for years as an apprentice in a shop, which went out of business. Thus, Old Ham had taught Glenn to read. The reason why Glenn frowned was that he'd found that the book title was composed of weird words, which were not usually seen in the real world.

“Canine Olfactory Enhancement and Odor Mapping? What could this be about?” Glenn hadn't expected it to be such a strange book. He had thought it was a biography on some kind of troubadour, the type of book that was best-selling among the sons and daughters of the noblemen. Suddenly something struck him and, as a result, Glenn's eyes dilated with excitement.

“Could it be a book about great sorcerers recording their magical powers? It was said that sorcerers were mysterious and vicious. They would massacre people, swallow up the eyes of children and do experiments with the alive. Humans were awed by these beings, for the ease with which they decimated civilians and even knights. Nearly no men had ever had the privilege of seeing one and the issue of sorcery was talk reserved for the nobility.”

Glenn had pondered in his mind, many times, how the great sorcerers obtained their incredible powers and how they were chosen for learning sorcery in the first place.

“If I became a sorcerer and gained these powers, I would no longer be at the mercy of these nobles!” Excited about the idea, Glenn opened the Canine Olfactory Enhancement and Odor Mapping and began to read it word by word. It was a strenuous effort to read and he had to skip some of the words because he couldn't recognize them. Still, Glenn went wild with joy as if he had found out about a whole new world.

According to the book, ordinary human beings could smell 300 to 400 different types of odors and people with unusual sense of smell could discern up to 600 kinds. These figures were minuscule when compared to the number of scents that could be sensed by creatures like the Youthcry Fowl, a chicken that crowed like a

crying baby. Based on experimental results, it could discern at least 6,500 smells. There was also the Shade Butterfly, a butterfly which fed on the odors it collected and could determine the difference between over 8,200 kinds of smells.

The creature with the strongest sense of smell, however, was the three-headed Cerberus. None of the 17,852 types of odors, or the sum of odors that sorcerers had the ability to create, could evade the dog's capture. The book also introduced how sorcerers grew stronger through connecting with animals which had keen senses of smell. However, there was a frequent word "cell" in the book, of which Glenn had no idea.

"Glenn...Glenn!" Old Ham yelled at Glenn twice before he came back to the real world. He then stored the book away and jumped off the coach to help Old Ham dispose of the waste. With the wagon emptied of rubbish, they proceeded with the purchase of the luxuries for the nobles' binge that night. They returned to the Zi Jue Residence by dusk, and received their payment of a few bronze coins for their work before they set off back to their house in the countryside.

Glenn sat on the coach and was absorbed in the reading of the sorcery book, Canine Olfactory Enhancement and Odor Mapping.

"You little tyke. You are so into that book, hah? Is it that interesting?" Old Ham turned to Glenn.

Glenn replied with a big grin, unwilling to take his eyes off the mysteries buried in the book.

"Does the mountain that has life and can walk really exist? Are there rivers that flow from the sky? What are the foreign lands? And why is sorcery so powerful?"

All these questions were unanswered.

"You are 17. Get the house refurbished next year and land yourself a wife from the neighborhood, and I might see my

“grandson” born before I die,” Old Ham said to Glenn.

“What are you talking about? You will live to be a hundred,” Glenn returned casually.

“Ha-ha!” Old Ham whipped the horse and continued their drive on the familiar road.

Chapter 2: A Sorcerer

Unfortunately, Old Ham passed away before he could see Glenn get a wife. It was in early spring, and the intense winds of winter had begun to die down. Coming home from a day of slaving at the Zi Jue Residence, Old Ham and Glenn had prepared themselves a good meal with some beef and malt liquor, as a kind of ritual before commencing the house refurbishment for Glenn's marriage.

The next morning Old Ham didn't wake up and never did. He had died with a smile on his face, and that smile was still on his face when he was buried by Glenn and some nearby villagers. Perhaps the reason explaining that smile was because his wishes about Glenn had become a reality in his dream or was because he was satisfied with the meal that preceded his death. Glenn buried Old Ham's pipe with him, too.

In the following months, Glenn was in dismay yet life went on. He became the owner of the thatched house, the old horse, two gold coins and seventeen silver coins. Those were Old Ham's inheritance and were all that Glenn had.

Glenn actually had another property - the Canine Olfactory Enhancement and Odor Mapping. He would hide it in the same place where he kept the coins. When the day's work was finished, he would study it in the dim lamplight. To him, the book was a crack to peep into the world of sorcery.

Summer came. On a rather dull day, Glenn had finished off the mountain of rubbish as usual and was purchasing goods on an outskirts market for the nobleman's banquet at the Zi Jue Residence. After having paid the vendors, Glenn was sitting on the coach and was looking up at the azure sky decorated with the moving clouds.

The vendors and their hired hands would be responsible for loading the stuff which Glenn had ordered. Among them a blond

freckle-faced village girl was mounting the goods onto his wagon, as efficiently as a boy around her age could. She snuck glances at Glenn several times and her heart was racing. She had a crush on Glenn a year ago, and her affection to him had been growing by the day ever since. She was actually the girl whom Old Ham had wanted Glenn to marry. Although Glenn was not opposed to the arrangement, he had no feelings for the timid and hard-working girl who was, at most, a little sister to him in his heart.

Now that Old Ham had gone, Glenn had never offered to see the girl once. Their meetings were only the brief periods of time when Glenn was purchasing the luxuries on the market where she worked.

At the time she knew that Glenn was about to leave as the goods had been nearly finished loading. She was eager to have a few words with him, and she could not restrain herself anymore:

“Glenn, I saw a sorcerer this morning. Can you believe it? He passed by here and asked for the way to Bi Seer City. The crowd of people here was so startled and agitated to see a sorcerer in person, and it was the first time I’ve ever seen one, too!” The girl assumed a fake smile and watched the nice-looking Glenn timidly.

“A sorcerer?” The word ‘sorcerer’ roused the bored Glenn up in a surprise. “Are you sure?”

“Positive. Loads of people saw him.” The girl nodded, as happily as a lark.

“How does he look?” Glenn pressed her with another question.

“He wore a loose gown, like a cloak, only without the hood. I could barely see his face, because it was misted up by something. And he held a frog in his hand, a frog with red eyes. Oh, right, he was talking with Yi Ma,” capturing Glenn’s attention and his yearning for more details, the girl told him everything she knew.

“Thanks. It is very kind of you to share this!” Glenn was excited

on hearing the news. He had gotten the book for half a year and this was the first information that he'd obtained about a sorcerer.

Glenn then drove the coach to Yi Ma's. Yi Ma was a nobody, and she was just the one whom the sorcerer had talked to. She was in her 20's and was a mother of two children. She was wearing an apron, which was tied around her beefy waist. Her husband, Picasso, was a hunter. He had sinewy muscles, and his face had a scar left by the scratch of a wild pig. Seeing that Glenn was at the door, Picasso went to answer it, and the two little boys of theirs were staring at Glenn curiously.

"Bi Seer City. He went to Bi Seer City." Glenn confirmed the rumor.

Glenn then rode the horse toward Bi Seer City as fast as the horse would allow, and he feared that it might stumble.

Arriving at the Zi Jue Residence, he took notice of the nasty butler and four strong knights behind him at the front entrance. They were facing a mob.

The old butler was shouting at a dozen of village men:

"Your farmlands were bestowed by Lord Zi Jue. If he levies a tax, then you pay the tax. If he raises the tax, then you also pay it. You want to rebel against the Lord?"

Glenn was kept waiting and turned anxious as the chaos at the entrance had been blocking his way to unload the stuff from the wagon, and the village men had shown no intention of leaving.

"You scummy lowlives!" The butler continued. "Drive them away!"

The butler shouted the order of expulsion to the four knights. The crowd of protesters was then dispersed after receiving a good beating and kicking from the knights.

Protests over the tax issue broke out every year, yet they would be always subdued in violent ways.

The butler afterwards turned about and trod into the yard.

Knowing that everything was under control, Glenn spurred the horse and crossed the entrance.

“Stop!” the butler howled, “Why are you running so late? You wanna pack and go?”

Glenn sulked. One could tell it from his twitching mouth. He cursed the old butler in his mind:

‘You’ve looted two silver coins out of me this month. I have to work here half a month to get that much money. And you still want more?’

Glenn was not like Old Ham. He was young and he couldn’t control his anger.

“I got delayed by the chaos at the entrance. Besides, I came here on time.”

“You little bastard! How dare you talk with me like that? You are such a waste of his Lord’s nurturing. Get lost now and never come back!” The butler bristled and his face turned livid.

Glenn left the residence and he cursed the butler to burn in hell.

The butler followed Glenn out and yelled at the knights:

“Beat that brat to death if he ever comes back or you will never be allowed back!”

Glenn suddenly recalled his real business. He then set his rage aside and went to tie his coach to an elm tree nearby and ran towards a blacksmith shop. At the door of the shop, he cried through the glass window to an apprentice in the shop: “Brother Six.”

Glenn had neither brothers nor other relatives. Glenn was in a small group which was made up of ten beggars. They occupied the begging trade in Bi Seer City. Brother Six was a member of the group, too, and Six referred to the ranking in the group based on

seniority. The group broke when Glenn chose to go away with Old Ham.

Brother Six ended up as an apprentice in a blacksmith shop and Brother Two labored in the countryside. As for the others, no words had been ever heard from them over the years.

“Glenn, what brings you here? Are you doing okay?” the apprentice said in a surprise as he opened the door. Having engaged in iron-forging, Brother Six, who was tall in stature, had grown into a large man, and as he walked towards Glenn, he carried with him a foul odor produced from sweat.

“Brother Six. You know things and there is a rumor that a sorcerer is in town. Have you heard anything about this?”

“How did you know it? It is true, though. A sorcerer is here to search for candidates who have a potential for learning sorcery. But it costs a gold coin to take the test.” Brother Six shrugged, “The owner of this shop had brought his son to the test and they failed of course, and he has been bemoaning his lost gold coin for like ever.”

“Where is the sorcerer?” Glenn inquired.

“You wanna go meet him? A gold coin is a lot of money.” Brother Six’s face fell.

Glenn balked at the idea for a moment. The consumption of one gold coin would be a great impact on him since he only had two of them.

But Glenn knew that this might be the best chance for a better life, So, he nodded resolutely towards Brother Six.

Brother Six gaped at this shocking answer. As he recovered from the shock, he replied. “The sorcerer is at the governor’s house, and for your information, the governor’s daughter has been the only one who qualified yet.”

“Thanks!”

In great exultation, Glenn dashed to his thatched house to fetch some coins for the qualification test. He headed straight to the corner of his room after entry to his house and dragged out a box from under his bed. In the box were all the coins that he had saved up. He counted out 100 silver coins, which equaled one gold coin, and put them into a stringed linen bag. He paused for a second and decided to take the Canine Olfactory Enhancement and Odor Mapping.

‘I am going to be a sorcerer,’ he thought.

He locked up the box of coins and set off toward the governor’s house. The governor was a marquis by rank, and marquis was the highest title in the city. Thus, he was the most powerful person in the city. The day was longer than the night since it was summer, so when Glenn finally arrived at the governor’s house, it was not yet dark.

The residence was under tight security. There were at least eight knights who were guarding at the main entrance. A large crowd of people were streaming in and out, and most of the people present were rich businessmen or high-birth noblemen who had taken their sons and daughters there.

Among the ones who were coming out, all of them seemed rather disappointed.

Glenn speculated that they must have failed the test. Having no time to consider further, Glenn elbowed his way forward, and as he was trying to get through the entrance, he was stopped by a coarse voice.

“Wait! One gold coin for the test fee!” A boy around his age was roaring at him.

Glenn pulled out the bag of coins and handed it to him. The boy snatched it and flung it into a big wood box behind him. But he didn’t count the coins.

“Judging from the manner he speaks and the clothes he wears, he must be from a village family. God knows why he has such a desirable job and where he has picked up that pride.”

Glenn snorted in contempt and followed the others into the residence.

Chapter 3: Weird Things Happened At The Governor's Residence

“This place is much more extravagant than Zi Jue’s,” Glenn murmured as he was pushed forward in the crowd.

He couldn’t wait. He peeked into the hall eagerly and saw a loosely dressed man sitting in the middle of the sitting room. The man’s face was exactly as the girl who adored Glenn had described. It was covered by a thin film of mist or something.

‘Is this what a sorcerer looks like?’ Glenn wondered.

On the desk in front of the sorcerer stood a transparent crystal ball, which was oozing out some soft light, and the light wrapped the hall in a mysterious aura. Adding to the mystery was the constant croaking sounds from a red-eyed frog, which was crouching next to the ball.

Seeing a sorcerer for the first time, Glenn was thrilled in delight, and his blood was pumping faster as he kept on staring.

“It was her! The little girl at the Zi Jue Residence!” Glenn saw a chubby brown-haired girl standing still behind the sorcerer, and her lips were pouting as if to say she was not happy about all this.

“She was the girl who threw Canine Olfactory Enhancement onto the ground at the Zi Jue Residence.” Glenn said it out loud.

“The girl was the first pick. She has been chosen by the Sorcerer and she’s the governor’s daughter,” someone from the crowd echoed.

“The governor must have bribed the Sorcerer,” another person said bluntly.

‘She gave in and had come to learn sorcery in accordance with the will of her father, the governor. That’s why she is unhappy,’ Glenn thought in his mind.

There were two other people who were standing behind the Sorcerer. Like the governor's daughter, they had been tested as qualified to learn sorcery but were selected at the Sorcerer's previous stop. The two looked a lot like each other.

"They must be a pair of siblings, or they may be related in some other way," Glenn murmured.

The boy of the siblings was full of disdain as he was flinging overbearing looks at the other candidates who were waiting in long lines for the test, while the girl was a little bit timid as she was being closely watched by so many people.

"Being selected from among thousands of candidates as students for sorcery-learning must feel good, not to mention the fact that all the rich noblemen and lords would be really nice to them. It's like being catapulted to fame," Glenn guessed.

Indeed, ever since the siblings, Chris and Nina Hank, had emerged as would-be sorcerers from their poor hunting family, the local lords had been buttering them up with both sweet words and gifts. The downpour of praises made Chris feel that he was the chosen one.

"Mental strength: six points. Failed! Next one." The Sorcerer read the information that appeared on the crystal ball as the test-taker touched the crystal ball. That was the entirety of the qualification-testing process. The candidates put their hands on the crystal ball and information about their mental strength, one of the key indicators of qualification would emerge on the surface of it. The girl taking the test opened her eyes and stepped back, feeling embarrassed.

"Another one failed..."

"How is it possible?"

The throng of people sighed as they clamored for the girl to quickly get off.

A whole day had almost passed, and no one, except for the daughter of the governor, had passed the test. The rest of the crowd who hadn't taken the test would have gone home were it not for the one gold coin they had paid.

“Mental strength: 5 points. Failed! Next one.”

The next test-taker curled his lips and sneaked out of the way.

As Glenn was marching closer to the forefront of the waiting line, people who had failed the test continued to pile up. He was getting nervous by the minute, and the closer he stepped forward, the more stressful he became. At one point, he became so stressed that he wanted to give in.

It was the turn of the boy in front of Glenn to take the test. His name was Wade. He strode up to the crystal ball and put his left hand on it, with his eyes closed.

“Mental strength: 9 points. F...” The word “failed” didn't finish. Wade had tucked a bag of stones into the Sorcerer's cloak.

After checking the stones, the Sorcerer said calmly:

“Get behind me.”

The boy was the son of the man who owned the Moon Restaurant, the biggest one in Bi Seer City. So, he had gotten a rich daddy.

“Bribery?” Glenn was surprised, and a second later, he sighed. “I have nothing precious to offer the Sorcerer, and he wouldn't have any interest in a couple of gold coins. I am so doomed.”

“Thank you, Master!” Wade bent his body toward the sorcerer to show his gratitude.

The moment had come at last. Glenn held out his hand as the Sorcerer ordered. He then extended his trembling hand toward the crystal ball and finally touched it. Then, he closed his eyes for the moment to come. That was when weird things occurred.

Glenn felt that he was in a dream. The hall was shrouded by a huge upside-down transparent cauldron, and everyone in it stood rooted to the spot, and every movement they made was in a very slow motion.

Glenn, with his eyes still almost unopened, noticed a line of bowls on a desk at the corner, and the bodies of the bowls were imprinted with sophisticated whorls. In the bowls were cakes and fruits served for the candidates, who couldn't reach the cakes and fruits because they were moving like a snail.

At the time, a few jellyfish-like creatures were seen swimming around over the fruits. They had many tentacles with various colors, and they were all staring at Glenn after they detected his existence.

Glenn could feel that his body was shaking on seeing swimming jellyfish in the air.

He steadied himself seconds later and took a few steps forward to have a closer look at the peculiar creatures, but his effort to move frightened them. With a wave of their tentacles, they disappeared into the nearby wall as if they had melted into it.

Glenn was in shock, but he was in greater shock when he discovered about the candlestick. Among four other regular candlesticks on the desk, the one laid in the front suddenly turned into an enormous pig head and it was glowing. The pig head jerked in Glenn's direction and looked at him.

"It is a normal candle. I saw it. I was admiring the exquisite patterns on it." Glenn wondered.

The ghostly things gave Glenn the creeps. At the time, a howling sound took Glenn by surprise. Glenn turned and tracked the voice to a paper man coming out of a book.

"I am a [Xian](#) now. Neither the Dragons nor the other universe monsters can stop me anymore. I am undefeatable."

The Xian (also known as the Taoist gods) are a race of superhumanly powerful humanoid beings who have been worshipped by the Chinese and other East Asian cultures from 2000 BC into modern times. Essentially minor deities, often referred to as Immortals in other novels.

“It is Becoming a Xian through Cultivation, and I know that book!” Glenn caught sight of the book title while he was checking out the paper man.

The book was about how a man gained mastery of cultivation methods to become a Xian and how he did it by defeating all sorts of monsters existing in the universe.

“No way. Isn’t he the hero of the book? He looks exactly like him - the long robe, thick beard, and a neck as long as a giraffe.” Glenn was astonished.

“Where am I? Who are you? Are you a Xian, too?” The paper man asked a series of questions impatiently.

“I am not... not a Xian. I a...am here—” Glenn stuttered at the sight of a paper who talked.

Glenn didn’t have the time to finish the sentence as the paper man, in his fury, pulled out the sword from the scabbard and prepared to charge at Glenn.

Although Glenn was still conscious enough to tell that the sword was made of paper, he was almost paralyzed physically by this brutal violent action and couldn’t think of anything to fend the sword off.

At the moment, the book spine broke and widened gradually into a huge gap. It seemed that everyone in the hall would fall but they did not. They just hung in the air above the gap. It was as if there was an invisible floor that had kept them in the air, and there was a voice deep in the the gap repeating the paper man’s words.

“What is this?”

“What is this?”

“You idiot.”

“You idiot.”

...

Then, like a bolt of lightning, a giant scarlet tongue spewed out from the deep gap and coiled around the paper man several rings and tied him up. Glenn noticed that the huge tongue was made up of a countless number of snakes, which were entangled together and each of the snakes were biting the paper man greedily.

The tongue then retracted back into the darkness of the gap with the paper man who was still stuck to it, as if it was a compressed spring returning to its original state.

“Mental strength: 12 points, not bad. Get behind me,” the Sorcerer said with smile that was rarely seen.

“What was that?” Glenn slipped.

“What?” replied the Sorcerer.

“Nothing. Thank you. Master!” Glenn suddenly recovered from his mental stupor and realized that he was in the middle of the test.

Glenn moved behind the Sorcerer and his mind was still pondering the unbelievable things that had happened a few seconds ago. But everything had returned to normal. The cauldron was gone, the gap was closed, and people were moving at ordinary speed.

The rest of the candidates were all talking about him - a boy who had passed the sorcerer test.

Chapter 4: The Beauty Clam

The governor had prepared a sumptuous dinner feast for the Sorcerer and the six students who had been chosen to learn sorcery. The six students were Lafite, the governor's daughter, Chris and Nina Hank, Wade, the son of Moon Restaurant's owner, Sam, the toll keeper at the entrance of the governor's house, and Glenn.

On the table were toasted pork, mutton, beef and other types of meats that Glenn couldn't discern, and there were a variety of dipping sauces - chocolate, ginger-cream cheese and blackberry jam... almost 70 sorts of dishes and sauces.

'This is incredible! To be having dinner with the governor, the most influential man of Bi Seer City,' Glenn thought, 'although it is only because of the Sorcerer.'

"Glenn," said the Sorcerer.

"Master!" Glenn replied respectfully as he put down the knife and fork in his hands.

"Use your particular talent. In the test, your mental strength was rated at 12 points. Having a mental strength of more than 10 points means that you could foresee your talent when you put your hand on the crystal ball. What you experienced in your 'dream' during the contact with the ball had something to do with your talent, and that talent is crucial for you to become a sorcerer," the Sorcerer explained in a hoarse voice.

"Thank you, Master. I will strive to make the most of my talent," Glenn responded subconsciously, even though he had no idea what the Sorcerer meant by saying that he was talented.

The Sorcerer then turned to Lafite and Wade. "The mental strength you two obtained in the test was less than ten points, which should have disqualified you from learning sorcery, but

mental strength is something that can be gained. What matters the most in the world of sorcerers, rather than talent, is wisdom, and the determinant factor to wisdom is knowledge.”

“Thank you, Master. We will work hard at sorcery learning,” Lafite and Wade replied in chorus.

“Master! It must have been a tough ride. Now relax and try this shellfish I found at the South Frontier Sea. It is called the Beauty Clam, because its meat is actually a living beautiful girl. It’s quite precious and very hard to find,” the governor said to the Sorcerer in a servile way.

The governor then waved his hand, and seven young and gorgeous-looking maidens served plates of the Beauty Clams to the Sorcerer, the governor, and the six students, respectively.

‘Precious? In what way?’ Although Glenn had been used to the extravagant gala feasts, he was still intrigued.

“The Beauty Clams? I had some when I was on a business travel at the South Frontier Sea. It was 120 years ago. Do you have any idea what they really are?” the Sorcerer asked.

“I do have no idea. Please illuminate us, Master,” replied the governor.

“The Beauty Clams were human beings. Their tribe was hunted down by other stronger tribes who lived in adjacent regions. Most of the tribe members were female, and thus having little defense against their enemies. All the males of the tribe were captured and slaughtered while the women escaped the massacre by turning themselves into shellfish and are what many call the Beauty Clams,” the Sorcerer elucidated with enthusiasm to the people at the table.

“What a story.” Everybody was too shocked to comment except for the governor.

Not used to enjoying such a strange creature, Glenn didn’t try at

it. Instead, he watched quietly how the governor had pleased him with the clams.

“Bang! Bang!” The governor tapped twice on the clam’s shell with his index finger.

At the time, Glenn was able to get a closer look at the jewelry on the governor’s fingers. There were seven rings, gold or jade ones, on his fat fingers.

A few seconds later, the clam opened itself slowly.

Glenn’s eyes dilated on seeing the scene. A pretty and denuded girl was lying asleep in the shell. Her body was so supple that it felt as if there were no bones in her to support it. As the shell got widely opened, she woke up and yawned, looking around in curiosity.

The governor lifted her up to his drooling mouth. The beauty abruptly realized the danger she was in and screeched as she scrambled to break free.

Disregarding the screaming, the governor sucked the beauty mightily into his mouth.

“Wonderful. What a treat.” The governor snorted as he threw the shell into the trash. The beauty could still be heard shrieking in his belly.

The Sorcerer and Lafite enjoyed the Beauty Clams, too.

Glenn and the rest of the students followed and tapped the shell of the clams. Their eyes were fixated on the beauties nestling in their hands, and they were still unwilling to eat a living human.

“Besides its good taste, the consumption of the Beauty Clam helps purify the Element of Fire”. Seeing the hesitating looks on the students’ faces, the Sorcerer said persuasively. “And don’t get deluded into believing their good-looking appearances. Understand the truth: these Beauty Clams are mollusks, not humans.”

The group nodded.

After a pause, the Sorcerer proceeded, “There is a cost, though. Rumors have it that eating a Beauty Clam would make your aura more attractive to sea monsters and thus make you a more likely target. It is a curse.”

Glenn considered that it would be a good chance to leave a good impression on the Sorcerer if he pulled himself together and ate a ‘living human’. Therefore, he closed his eyes, jerked his head back and slid the beauty in his hand into his mouth.

Glenn didn’t dare chew the soft and wriggling piece of meat in his mouth; instead, he let it slither down through his throat and into his belly. He tried his best to pretend that the clam was only food but was betrayed by his twisted face and twitching lips.

The rest of the group followed Glenn’s lead and began eating. The clams’ screaming voices rose and fell in the hall.

One exception was Nina Hank. She was greatly repulsed by the cruelty, and pushed the plate of clams aside. She was such a soft-hearted girl.

The following day, Glenn decided to recover his coach and leave it at Brother Six’s. It had been tied to a tree near the Zi Jue Residence. Glenn could forget about the gold coins at home, but the coach had been Old Ham’s property for more than a decade. To Glenn, the coach was like Old Ham and under no circumstances would he ditch it. Lafite and Wade obviously didn’t understand this, and they sneered at Glenn as he rushed to get his coach.

“You son of a bitch. How dare you come back!” The butler howled as he saw Glenn blustering at the entrance of the Zi Jue Residence.

It turned out that Glenn couldn’t find the coach where he had tied it. He ventured a peek into the yard of the Zi Jue Residence and found that it was tied to a jujube tree in the yard. Glenn

wanted to break in but had been stopped by the guards at the entrance.

Deep within the butler's heart, he had hoped that Glenn would give in and continue to work for him because, in his hurry to dismiss Glenn, he had forgotten to find a replacement. He would be held accountable if the feast wasn't perfectly prepared.

"Mr. Butler. I will go and never come back, but please give me back my coach," Glenn retorted.

The butler had thought that Glenn had come for an apology and would beg for his old job back; instead, he was just here to claim his worthless coach. The butler turned furious and yelled: "Get lost right now! There is no coach, and if there were, it wouldn't belong to you!"

"Sparta, throw the brat out!" He commanded to one of the guards at the front entrance. Hearing the instruction, Sparta, a large man, came over to Glenn, lifted him over his head and...

"What is that?!" The massive man screamed in shock.

At that moment, a dazzling beam of black light was shooting towards the guard.

The big man relinquished his grip on Glenn immediately after he saw the black light coming at him and swiftly ducked his head to dodge it. The black light hit the pillar behind Sparta and then shattered into a mass of scary-looking black bugs. There were approximately 7,000 of them, and each of them was the size of a human nail and had wings and strong jaws.

A severe rebuke burst after the light:

"Sorcerers are not to be humiliated!"

"Have mercy! Please!" The guard begged for his life when he was besieged by a swarm of little creatures that were poised to launch an attack at him.

It was the Sorcerer who had fired the beam of light.

He ignored the big man's plea for mercy and pointed at him while chanting some weird words (what Glenn believed was a spell or an incantation), and out of the blue, the knight turned into a piglet.

"A piglet?" Glenn yelled, forgetting about his pain that had been caused by the fall.

The swarm of bugs then charged at the piglet and in a second, the large man had been completely devoured.

The butler stood stunned on seeing this dramatic scene, and his life was not going to be spared, either.

A large red tongue whizzed at the butler, rolled him up and then retracted. It was the tongue of the red-eyed frog. The frog had grown to the size of a human as it jumped high into the air, around 20 feet above the ground. The frog then stuck out his huge tongue and swallowed the butler. The frog then shrunk to its normal size and returned to the Sorcerer's hand.

"Oh, it was the Sorcerer's frog! It enlarges itself!" Glenn suddenly figured out what was going on.

"A Sorcerer is not to be humiliated," Glenn murmured, "when I become one, I will not be bullied, then."

The drama having ended, Glenn brought the coach to Brother Six's and caught up with the group.

Chapter 5: Knowledge

“The place we are going to or where you will be studying sorcery, is called the Lilith School of Sorcerers, and it will take two months to reach the school by sea. My name is Apollo, and you are allowed to ask me one question for free before our journey ends,” the Sorcerer said to the students.

The team had left the governor’s residence for the Seer Port of Bi Seer City. The governor, the master of the Zi Jue Residence, as well as many other noblemen had accompanied them for a mile or two, before they turned back at the urging of Apollo.

One of the students, Sam, stayed close to the Sorcerer. He constantly flattered the Sorcerer along the way and did all the dirty work for him, such as carrying his frog, his crystal ball and the like, in his desire to ask more questions. Contrary to his submissiveness to Apollo, Sam looked at the rest of the group scornfully as if he was the better one.

“Master, there are points about the Meditation methods that I still can’t comprehend. They are really elusive. Will you please illuminate me?” Sam bowed and asked the Sorcerer.

Catching Sam asking yet another question, Wade, who was marching behind Apollo and Sam, mumbled in jealousy: “You’d stoop so low as that?”

“I will work hard at sorceries. I will be the greatest sorcerer ever!” Chris whispered to his sister Nina, who made no comments about her brother’s ambition. She was a quiet girl.

Glenn didn’t come to ask questions because he heard it clearly: one question was free of charge; but he didn’t have the money for a second question and was worried about the tuition fees he would have to pay at the sorcerer’s school.

“Lafite! She must know something. She had been forced by her

father to attend the Lilith School of Sorcerers. Why not ask her?" Glenn turned back and walked over to Lafite, who was moping about the prospect of learning sorcery.

There were two questions Glenn had in his mind: "What is the world of sorcerers really like?" and "Why were sorcerers blessed with these powers?"

"The world of sorcery?" Lafite threw a surprised look at Glenn. Lafite had thought that Glenn had come to cotton up to her, something she had grown used to as the daughter of the most powerful man in Bi Seer City. Fawning over the rich and the powerful was a common occurrence no matter where you were.

"The world of sorcery might not be as terrific as you may have imagined. For one thing, everything you owned in the real world would be lost on the Sorcerer Continent," said Lafite, biting her lips morosely.

Lafite hated talking to the overbearing noblemen in her house, but she hated it even more to speak to people of low birth. But she was unfortunately alone at the time, far away from the aegis of her father, so she hid away her usual callousness towards others' struggle when she was queried by Glenn. She thought that he might be someone she could talk with.

"The Sorcerer Continent? What is it?" Glenn broke in.

"It is the world where sorcerers live. It's extremely vast. Far bigger than you could possibly imagine," answered Lafite. "And you may never be able to come back to the human world."

"Never come back? Like in a prison?"

"Yep, and you have to stay low-key. If you have neither power nor connections there, your pride is gonna cost your life."

...

After hearing Lafite's introduction on the Sorcerer Continent, Glenn balked. He contemplated that there would not be any

noblemen on the Sorcerer Continent to keep order like they did in the real world. Lafite caught the terrified and indecisive look on Glenn's face and then said in a soothing tone:

“But sorcerers act by rules, too, and there is the Holy Tower to enforce the rules.”

Glenn didn't reply.

He followed the other team members silently and was lost in thought. He remembered Old Ham who had toiled for a lifetime in search of a better life, while he had been bullied by the butler and the knights of the Zi Jue Residence, until death had ended all his sufferings. Glenn respected Old Ham, but he didn't want to repeat his life. He wanted to change his life for the better, at least not to have to starve or grovel.

“Lilith School, here I come!”

Seeing Glenn's determined look, Lafite knew that he had overcome his fears of coming to the Sorcerer Continent.

“You've made the right decision. If you had quit, Sorcerer Apollo would have killed you for sure,” Lafite said with a grim laugh.

The group was suddenly halted at the time.

“Leave all your money, or you will die!” a threatening voice howled.

“Robbery?!” Glenn was taken aback. He knew that Bi Seer City had been in a good order under the current governor and lootings had almost gone extinct. However, there was one exception – the Hood. The gang was savage. They would rob any passers clean, rape the women and slit people's throat if they had no money to offer.

For a second, Glenn was almost scared to death, but the next second, he realized that he was totally safe since he was with Sorcerer Apollo.

The gang had seven members, and each of them held a sharp machete in their hands. They were throwing vicious glances at the Sorcerer and the students.

“Hand us your money or—” He didn’t have the luxury of finishing the menace. The frog, which had been crouching on Sam’s palm, jumped high into the air, swelled into a human-sized one and swooped upon the man who was talking.

The series of actions were taken so fast that the talking man had not been able to respond.

As a result of the huge impact caused by the frog’s heavy blow, the man melted into a puddle of blood. The rest of the gang dissipated and scampered off in a panic.

“A sorcerer is not to be humiliated!” The Sorcerer pointed his finger at the running men and flashes of black lights were seen shooting at them, causing them to stumble. The ‘fight’ had only taken a few seconds and the street was now strewn with dead bodies.

The frog returned to its original size and landed on Sam’s hand. Sam shuddered as he held the formidable frog again. The other students were quivering, too. Sorcerer Apollo, however, continued on the journey as if nothing had occurred.

Having kept himself from asking Apollo a question for more than an hour, Glenn decided to ask him one - a question which Lafite had failed to answer.

He then sped up and came over to the Sorcerer.

“Master. I have a question. Why do sorcerers have these powers? I saw you kill the butler, the knights, and the robbers. It was amazing! I have been wondering how you could do that?” Glenn calmed his trembling heart and asked.

“Hm, that’s a good question.” Sorcerer Apollo looked at Glenn, who was eager for the answer.

“It is knowledge that gives me all the powers. As a great sorcerer once said, ‘With my knowledge, give me a fulcrum on which to place it, I shall move the world!’” Sorcerer Apollo explained.

“Power comes from knowledge and magical force, but knowledge is what matters the most.” the Sorcerer pulled a book out from his cloak and handed it to Glenn.

“A Guide to Meditation,” Glenn wondered loudly.

“Yeah, I wrote it. You may find something useful in it.”

Glenn held the book firmly as if it was going to be taken away.

“With enough knowledge, I, too, can move this world one day!” Glenn mused.

Chapter 6: At The Krakatoa Harbor

After departing from the Seer Port, the group sailed half a month before they arrived at the Krakatoa Harbor. There had been a new member. It was a boy named Robinson. He had been accepted as a student for sorcery learning during the group's brief stay at the Apex Port, prior to their arrival at the Krakatoa Harbor. Robinson was garrulous and worse, he divulged people's secrets. The worst, though, was that Glenn had become the target of his yammerings.

Back in the house of the governor of Rothenstein, the city where the Apex Port was located, Robinson had cried with delight when he passed the crystal ball test. He had almost turned the house upside down by chanting and dancing around when he was squelched by Sorcerer Apollo who, in the end, had spared him from any punishment because Glenn spoke up for him. Since then, Glenn had been "forced" to live with Robinson's constant chatter of, in Glenn's mind, trivialities and scandals. He was a nagging problem to Glenn.

"Glenn, Shelly has a birthmark on her butt, did you know?" Robinson said proudly. "I snuck a peek at it while she was in the shower. But don't tell anybody."

"I won't, but who is this Shelly?" Glenn asked half-heartedly because he had no interest in such topics.

"Shelly? You don't know Shelly? Shelly! Elvis's lover!" Robinson hissed.

'Elvis? I don't know Elvis, either,' Glenn grumbled in his mind, but he gave in to Robinson's persistence of "imparting" his knowledge and instead, he said:

"Oh, I see."

Similar situations had occurred for dozens of times since they met.

The ship had arrived at and been anchored off the Krakatoa Harbor.

“Get off the ship!” The Sorcerer commanded.

Following Sorcerer Apollo’s order, the students hastened to disembark the ship.

The Krakatoa Harbor was the biggest one on the Eastern Coral Island, occupying an area of approximately 960,000 square feet, with one main dredged channel through it, from the mouth to the bay.

There were hundreds of ships anchored off the island, some of them stretched over 1,000 feet in length. A considerable number of people were streaming in and out of the harbor at the time.

“Wow, the Krakatoa Harbor. What a beautiful view!” Lafite gazed out at the sea.

Lafite had seemingly forgotten about her grievances about being coerced to learn sorcery and now basked herself in the splendor of the ships lined in the harbor.

She was tall in stature, around the height of Glenn and she had a slim and tender body. She was wearing a tight dress and a strip of cloth was tied around her waist like a sash. As she faced the sea, she closed her eyes and spread out her arms to the extent that the strip of cloth accentuated perfectly the curves of her body.

“Magnificent! She is truly amazing,” Robinson said out and loud, and the noise of him gulping his saliva could be clearly heard by Glenn, who was standing behind him.

Glenn was admiring her beauty, too, only in silence, and his heart was pounding heavily.

“Lafite, my sweetie, look at you, how attractive you are! You are the one I have been awaiting my whole life. You are my destiny. Yes, you are. Lafite, please be my savior, be my girlfriend!” A volley of flattering words tumbled out of Robinson’s mouth as he

was staring at Lafite affectionately.

‘Pursuing Lafite? Has he gone mad?’ Glenn scratched his head, thinking about what would befall the poor Robinson. The other students were also gawking at him as if they were expecting something ominous to happen. Meanwhile, Nina Hank, who was astonished at seeing a public declaration of love, was biting her lips bashfully.

Lafite turned around and glared at Robinson with a gloomy face.

“Be your savior, huh?” Lafite cast a menacing look at Robinson.

The next second she chanted something in a low voice and pointed a finger at Robinson. Out of nowhere, a vine appeared and crept quickly and wound around Robinson. In a moment, Robinson was wrapped up tightly in several rings.

“It was sorcery!” The group marveled.

“Mmm...” Robinson growled as he wiggled to break loose of the vine, only to find himself being gagged by the vine that had rearranged itself.

People who were hurrying by stopped and crowded around to watch what they supposed to be some sort of street performance.

“What was that sorcery you just cast?” the other students asked Lafite.

“The Magical Ring. It's a magical tool! I used my magical force to evoke the ring. That's why I was able to control the vine,” she explained gaily because that vine sorcery had worked.

Glenn had finished reading *A Guide to Meditation* and knew that magical force was related to mental strength. He had tried and failed to improve his mental strength, though, so seeing Lafite commanding her mental strength and magical force really cheered him up and spurred him on.

Half a minute later, Lafite ended the spell, and the vines

disappeared immediately.

At the time, a detail of knights led by a man on a fat horse came before the Sorcerer, who had been watching the students' mischief. The man leading the pack dismounted the horse and bent his body toward the sorcerer: "Master, the Duke has been waiting for you. He has had a dinner prepared for you."

"Okay," replied the sorcerer casually, disregarding the noises from the bustling audience.

The dinner was great. Glenn had gotten used to the lavish feasts offered by nobles because they had been welcomed by them with a banquet at every stop. And he had learned some social etiquettes about how to communicate and interact with the dignitaries.

The Duke was sitting opposite to Sorcerer Apollo at the table and he gestured to the Sorcerer to enjoy more of the food. He dressed and talked in a manner that displayed that he belonged in a higher rank than that of the marquises of previous cities, and it seemed that he was well-acquainted with the sorcerer.

"Apollo, are you bothered by something?" the Duke asked the Sorcerer with a caring look.

Sorcerer Apollo was whisking a metal spoon in the gravy boat, although he seemed to have no appetite to enjoy it. Hearing Mr. Duke's caring words, he sighed:

"It's getting out of hand, and sorcerers are going missing. You were right. It is safer here, I mean, in the human world. None of the bad things happening will affect this place."

"Ha!" The Duke snorted, "I chickened out. Unlike you, I couldn't move up to a higher rank there, so, I quit and reduced myself to this quiet life here," the Duke replied as he dipped the medium rare steak into the caviar.

The Sorcerer fell into silence.

"And who will be here to pick the students up?" the Duke

inquired.

“Dior.”

“Oh...”

“Life there may not be that hard for them. The Lilith School of Sorcerers, huh? It’s easier to get by over there. Things might be a lot different in the Black Isotta School of Sorcerers—”

Sorcerer Apollo interrupted the duke impatiently. He had been bored of the current conversation.

“A huge rift was found in the Underground World. I am going to go check.” Apollo switched the topic.

The banquet concluded. Glenn and the other students were led to a beautiful and quiet manor for a rest. They would stay at the Duke’s manor for around seven days before they would be carried to the Lilith school by Dior.

A gentle breeze with a slight hint of fishy smell wafted in as Glenn opened the windows of his room. The manor was located on a cliff facing a sea.

“What is the Sorcerer Continent like?” Glenn wondered. These days he had witnessed the terrific yet dreadful sorceries - the light beam weapon, the red-eyed frog, and the moving vine - and these powers were so wonderful that he craved them dearly. However, he retched about the fact that Sorcerer Apollo was killing people without any remorse.

“Moving along! That’s what I should do,” Glenn murmured.

He then closed the windows, lit up the candle and immersed himself in the contemplation of his new book - A Guide to Meditation.

Chapter 7: The Dark Wells

“Use your mental strength to evoke the magical force...” Glenn was sitting in his room and was reading *A Guide to Meditation*.

“Magical force is powerless itself; it has to be controlled by mental strength,” mumbled Glenn.

Glenn had stayed at the Duke’s manor for five days, and he had done nothing but studied the Guide. Fortunately, he had conjured up a little bit of magical power in the morning.

But Glenn needed to seek ‘knowledge’, plus mental strength. Magical force would be put into effect only when the practitioner used his/her mental strength, which was to be gained in large part through acquirement of knowledge.

Glenn sat before his desk morosely and was scratching his hair restlessly. He had been more enchanted with sorcery ever since Lafite, a student, produced the vine that tied up Robinson.

“Glenn! Glenn!” A loud noise came from the yard of the manor.

It was a distinctive voice - shrill and rattling. Glenn knew that it must be Robinson. Although Glenn harbored strong antipathy towards the prattling Robinson, he wanted to be engaged in something else for a distraction.

“What’s up?” Glenn hid the book under his pillow, put out the candles and sped out of his room to greet Robinson.

“Hey, Glenn,” Robinson said with a big smile, “have you heard of the Dark Wells?”

“The Dark Wells? No, I haven’t. What are they?” Glenn inquired as he smoothed out his long silky robe, which he had obtained as a gift from a nobleman in the previous port.

As one might say, “Clothes make the man.” Now, with this sumptuous elegant-looking robe, coupled with the serious look on

his face, Glenn appeared as if he was a man of gentry.

“Seriously, you haven’t? Come with me, then, or you will regret it for the rest of your life,” said Robinson mysteriously as he dragged Glenn’s arm and ran out of the manor.

After half an hour of running, they arrived at a boisterous bazaar by dusk.

The streets were lit red by the numerous candles which were hanging in the air, supported by lines stretching between the opposite shopfronts. Vendors were peddling foods, candies, and toys from their trolleys. Glenn was curious and wanted to try everything. He had rarely hung out at night since a curfew was in place for all ordinary people in Bi Seer City.

However, nothing in the bazaar seemed to be of any interest to Robinson. He was thinking about the Dark Wells.

He then dragged Glenn by his arm and bulldozed his way through the sea of people.

After around ten minutes of sprinting, they arrived at a manor.

“Here we are!” Robinson exclaimed as Glenn stopped, gasping for air.

In front of them was a manor larger than the Duke’s. It was nestled in a thick and leafy jungle.

Moonlight shone upon the large trees surrounding the manor, and beams of moonlights were reflected by the shuffling branches to the windows of the manor, making the place more mysterious.

Young couples were strolling out the archway of the manor at the time, with surprising smiles on their faces.

Glenn and Robinson were led to a grim-looking hall after paying two gold coins of admission fee.

A wrinkled old woman was at the entrance and she handed each of them a transparent stone. The old woman had dim eyes that

starkly contrasted the gleam of the stones, and her yellowish teeth were indented as if they had been gnawed by some animal.

“Have a good time,” said the woman.

But Glenn was still confused about the stone in his hand.

“You see the wells out there? There are over 70 of them. You pick one and drop the stone in, and then you can talk with ‘people’ from the Foreign Land.”

“The Foreign Land?” Glenn gawked.

“The Foreign Land! You think we are alone out in this universe? No, the human world and the sorcerer world, they’re just only a part out of the many worlds,” explained Robinson proudly.

“Weird creatures might surface from the well occasionally, but generally it is safe and really exciting,” Robinson went over to a well, leaving Glenn alone.

Glenn flipped the stone before he headed off to a well, eager to have a conversation with an ‘alien’.

Reaching the edge of a well, Glenn inclined his body forward, and peeked into the well. The water in it was calm and glossy like a mirror. And it was around six feet deep.

Glenn drew a deep breath and flung the stone into the well, creating countless ripples across the water surface.

Almost instantly, an oddly-shaped creature with unclear features emerged in the water.

The creature swam up but stopped when its gray antennae reached the surface. It then broke the surface and exposed its bust in the air. It studied Glenn in curiosity.

“Are you a sorcerer?” the creature asked.

It was incredibly strange. Although Glenn was sure that he got every word of what the creature said, he was certain that he didn’t hear it or, at least, not through his ears. It was as if the message

had been directed straight to his brain or something.

“Who are you?” inquired Glenn.

“Don’t speak! You fool, communicate using your soul!” the creature scowled at Glenn’s mouth-speaking. It seemed that it could not make out a word of Glenn’s speech.

“Didn’t you know that the Foreign Landers communicate through soul?” It added.

“Soul?” Glenn’s face darkened. But at least he knew he could receive and understand messages sent by souls. But he did not know that it was because of the stone that conjured the creature up or because of his gift.

Living things from the Foreign Land communicated using their souls. They didn’t talk and some of them didn’t have hearing ability at all.

“Are you a sorcerer?” the creature asked the question again.

“Urh...” Glenn stuttered, “No speaking, then how...”

“You answer my questions by nodding and shaking your head, okay? A nod is a “yes”, and a shake means “no”, are we clear?”

Glenn nodded with force.

“Are you a sorcerer?”

Glenn shook his head.

“Then what are you? A human?” said the creature rudely.

Glenn gave another nod.

“Damn it. I traveled all the way here to talk with a human?” It shook its head disappointedly.

“Still, I will answer two questions according to the fairness principle in effect on the the Foreign Land, since you have technically answered two of mine,” It said seriously.

“But since your voice makes no sense to me, I will instead tell you

two pieces of information. First, I am a level four star denizen from the Star City of the Foreign Land. Second, in terms of energy level, I am basically a level two sorcerer on the Sorcerer Continent.”

The star denizen then disappeared into the water the moment it finished speaking.

Glenn was embarrassed by the fact that the little creature was not willing to waste another second of its time to talk to him.

Glenn now knew that there were many different worlds out there. He was also told by Robinson that encounters between humans and ‘people’ from the Foreign Land foreboded evil if they were made not through the Dark Wells.

“The strange creatures that appeared back in the governor’s house in Bi Seer City - the swimming jellyfish, the paper man, the giant tongue - are they from a different world, too?” Glenn wondered.

Chapter 8: A Tussle Over The Ship's Cabin

It was the seventh day of Glenn's stay at the Duke's residence. Sorcerer Dior had arrived at Krakatoa Harbor to take the newly selected would-be sorcerers to the Lilith School of Sorcerers. Apollo, the group of students and the Duke, as well as a large audience of sorcerer-admirers, had come to the port to welcome Dior.

Dior was dressed in a long black cloak. His face was obscured by a thin layer of mist, like that of Sorcerer Apollo. What distinguished him from Apollo was his right eye. It was covered with a black patch, like a pirate's eye, and he had a ghastly pale forehead, which could be caught through the mist from time to time.

"How was your selection? Fruitful?" asked Apollo after he greeted Dior with a bow.

"It was great. I've recruited hundreds of students. And I've made a fortune," replied Dior happily.

Dior had the same job as Apollo – recruiting potential sorcerers – and they were each responsible for selecting from their own assigned territories.

Apollo was quite shocked at the huge number of students Dior had selected because he had selected only seven!

Apollo displayed no sign of surprise, though. He responded with a nod and the frog in his hand was making ribbiting sounds.

"What a spectacle! Magnificent! You arrange things so wonderfully," said Sorcerer Dior to the Duke, who was standing beside Apollo.

Dior was referring to the grand send-off ceremony by saying 'arrange'.

Although the majority of the crowd had come voluntarily because of their admiration to the sorcerers, some of them indeed

had been paid to do so. So, technically speaking, it was an “arrangement”.

“Don’t make these youngsters too proud, though. They might get spoiled by such pomp and circumstance,” continued Dior, casting a glance at the students.

Glenn noticed an interesting fact about Dior. He kept himself hovering a few inches off the ground as he talked with Apollo and the Duke.

‘Perhaps it was a habit developed to make him look less short.’ Glenn thought.

“I hope that they would come back for a visit someday when they become a sorcerer,” replied the Duke.

“A small chance! You know well how hard it is to become a sorcerer!” said Dior with a scornful look on his face, “Luckily, I managed to obtain two students who were tested at 15 points of mental strength. Very gifted! I wanted them to learn sorceries under me, but there are barriers. It seemed that they have connections in the Lilith School and some other sorcerers want them, too.”

“Rather than mental strength, knowledge matters the most.” Apollo shook his head.

“Knowledge and talent go side by side,” retorted Dior.

Half an hour later, the seamen had finished supplying the ship with sufficient food, fresh water, drinks, fuel and other necessities.

Dior said dully to Apollo and the Duke:

“This is it. I am going.”

“I will come back to the school and take a look at the seven kids in 20 years maybe, if the trip to the Underground World goes well.” Apollo bowed to Dior to say goodbye.

“Now, come aboard, all of you.” Dior yelled an order at the

students.

Anchor weighed, the ship sailed off the Krakatoa Harbor.

As the ship had gone out of sight, the crowd began to thin. Apollo bid a farewell to the Duke and left.

Onboard the large ship, the seven students who had been selected by Apollo – Glenn, Robinson, Lafite, Chris and Nina Hank, Wade and Sam – quickly found that they were not the only candidates on the ship.

“Rule number one: NO INTERNAL STRIFE. Killing sorcerers from the same school has never and will never be tolerated. If someone dares break this rule, you would be seared in a flame for seven days before being thrown into the sea for the sharks,” said Dior viciously.

“Rule number two: DON’T COME TO ME UNLESS SOMEONE HAS BEEN BEATEN TO DEATH,” Dior continued with a menacing voice.

“Barron, deliver the room cards and keep a close eye on them,” Dior bawled at a swarthy boy, who was at his side.

Dior then walked straight to his cabin, not intending to take another second of his time with the children.

“Yes, Master,” Barron answered.

“I am Barron, a [Legend Knight](#). Come find me if anything bad happens.” Barron looked serious. “Anything... like some beauty being molested.” Barron said wickedly as he surveyed his eyes up and down Lafite and Nina.

A Legend Knight was the recognised best in military capability, the title of whom was bestowed by a voting system, rather than a monarch, where all ballots cast by other knights would be counted.

Barron was shirtless at the time, and his pectoral muscles were massive, which acted as a signal that he was someone not to be

trifled with.

“Humph, if someone had the courage to do that, I would guarantee that he would be served as food for the sharks.” Lafite assumed a combative look.

“I will die before I let anyone touch my sister!” said Chris in the same threatening tone as Lafite’s.

Chris’ sister Nina blushed in embarrassment, and hid her head behind her brother’s back.

At the point, it seemed that a big fight was brewing.

Barron had been seasoned in real fights, so he was fearless. But he had intention to take the tough guys on. Instead, he clicked his tongue, rummaged through a wooden box for the cabin cards. He then slapped the cards to them and strode away.

The group began to find their cabins according to the cards in the five-decked ship.

Lafite was allocated to a room on the first deck, the lowest one, and her face turned livid for her bad luck. It was common sense that the lower the quarters were, the worse the conditions would be, because cabins below the water were noisy from the splashing of water and humming of the engines.

Glenn ended up on the third floor. It was fine for him as the living condition was okay, besides he had undergone far worse things while living in the countryside lodge with Old Ham.

Chris and Nina Hank were lucky to have a fifth-floor room, and they shared it. They were excited at the news and sped off joyously toward it.

“What cards? Does it matter?...get the hell out of here.” A rude voice erupted at Chris and Nina’s cabin. The voice was so loud that nearly everyone on the fifth level poked their head out of their cabins to see what was happening.

Chris and Nina's cabin had been taken by somebody.

"This is my room. You wanna go the hard way?" Chris Hank retorted, while Nina was scared and was pulling her brother's shirt.

Catching Nina whimpering, the guy in the cabin was aroused sexually a little bit. He then laughed grimly:

"Let the little beauty stay. She can live here" The man grinned at Nina, who was pulling her brother's shirt more heavily, as if to beg Chris to give up the cabin.

"You are so dead!" Chris snapped.

Like a hornet whose nest had been stirred, Chris clenched his fist and threw a punch towards the boy's nose.

The two boys then scuffled, pulling, shoving, elbowing and kicking...

Glenn's group had tracked the voice and came.

"As friends, we are supposed to step up," Wade said. But he was too scared to make a move.

Sam was watching the fight coldly and mumbled: "It's none of my business."

Wade scowled at Sam's apathetic remark despite the fact that he himself had shown no sign of going up to help.

It was Glenn and Robinson who finally ended the tussle. They came up and disentangled the two boys.

Glenn praised Chris for his sturdy body while he intimidated the other boy, who had gotten a swollen eye, to go away.

"You stay here. I'm gonna get help!" hissed the boy as he ran off angrily.

"I am not going anywhere. Go get your pals," replied Chris, showing no signs of budging at all.

“This is getting out of hand.” Glenn sighed.

Chapter 9: So-Called Rules

“Thwack!” A huge noise exploded in Chris’s cabin.

Chris had been tossed onto the wall opposite to the bed, which he was making for his sister. He bounced off the wall on the floor heavily, producing another loud thump.

“Eh? So weak?” A man put one foot on Chris’s chest and snorted.

Seconds later, Chris shook off the man’s foot and got up on his feet with a stagger. He then glared at the attacker.

The man in front of Chris was huge, at least seven feet tall, and his face was deformed in some way. The giant was staring at Chris foolishly, wondering why Chris was not able to fight back.

Nina tucked up her skirt, and hurried to support her brother with both hands.

“Hah! Andrew, my man, not everyone is endowed with the strength as impressive as yours, eh?” The boy who had been beaten up by Chris buttered up the big man and then threw a ferocious look at Chris.

Glenn who had come for help stood trembling in shock at this sudden brutal attack. A voice deep within his heart was growling: “Why are you not in a zoo or something, you large chunk of meat? Have you been raised eating growth hormone?”

“It’s not over yet!” A high-pitched voice broke the temporary silence.

A man bored his way through the spectators and came to the swollen-eyed boy. His beady eyes were darting around quickly. “Barry, look at this guy’s sister. Isn’t she amazing? Why not do her —”

“F*ck off, you bastard!” Chris snarled furiously at the man who had made the nasty suggestion. He then adopted a combative

stance as he pulled his sister behind him.

Chris received another mighty punch from Andrew, the large man, which sent him into the air. He struggled to stand up, and pressed one hand on his abdomen in pain.

“This is not fun. Sorcerer Dior said no killings on this ship!” The giant Andrew flexed his wrist. “You weaklings want to establish turf? Not a chance. Only the strongest can claim territory here.”

“Yeah, there’s no way for a coward like you to survive here. Let the Triad - Andrew, Barry and me - teach you a lesson,” said the man with the beady eyes. “Fists do the talking on this ship. You got the bigger fist, then you are the truth!”

The beady-eyed man was called “Mouse”. The nickname was given by the other members of the Triad - Barry and Andrew because of his face looked like that of a mouse.

Barry’s fury had not abated yet and he was obstinate in his vengeance.

“I want his sister,” Barry said as he walked over to Nina who quailed behind her injured brother.

As he approached Nina to perform the brutish acts, no one seemed to make a move to stop him.

The moment when Barry was about to touch her, someone stepped up:

“Stop that or I will go get Barron...He will...” The brave man who had stopped Barry was Wade, a boy who would flinch from any threats. Only, his bravery did not last long.

His valor collapsed after Barry gave him a fiendish look. Wade then recoiled a few steps, saying: “I was joking. It is none of my business.” .

But it was too late. Barry gave up on Nina, and strode up to Wade. He smacked him in the stomach. This act earned loud

cheers from the crowd of onlookers.

“Only the strong can survive and get a home? And the weak have to be despised and oppressed? Is this the rule of the Sorcerer Continent?” A sad feeling assailed Glenn.

The rest of Glenn’s group had come, too, but they couldn’t think of anything to deal with Andrew, who would squash all of them in less than a minute.

As Barry approached Nina again, an adorable voice jested:

“Haha, establish your turf? A turf fight? Interesting! I want your cabin, then. And this is your new card.”

A bronze card was thrown onto Andrew’s face and landed on the deck with a thud. Andrew, as well as Mouse, stopped in astonishment.

Barry released Nina and turned back to see what was happening.

“Is she crazy? Has she lost her mind?” the crowd hummed.

“Lafite! Right, Lafite! She knows sorcery! She could take Andrew down,” Glenn cried out.

Lafite waved her arm and her lips were murmuring something in the same low voice as she had done to Robinson.

In no time, her symbolic magical vine appeared, and in a split of a second, it climbed around Andrew and bound him tightly before the lumbering buffoon had the time to respond. The large man then crashed to the floor with a thump.

“You scoundrel, go to hell!” The big man defeated, Glenn rushed over to Barry and kicked him down.

“Have mercy, please. Spare my life. I didn’t mean it,” Mouse begged, and beads of sweat were rolling down from his forehead.

The place was now silent. People were all gawking as Lafite knocked Andrew down with a vine that had come out of nowhere. They were convinced that she was a sorcerer. That must be the

reason why she was able to conjure up the magical vine. They knew nothing about magical tools.

Lafite ignored Mouse's entreaty and dragged him to Chris. She then turned to Andrew.

"Now, your cabin is mine now, you big fella. Enjoy your time on the first floor," Lafite then ended the "sorcery" and the vine disappeared simultaneously.

She then went over to the big man's cabin and slammed the door behind her.

Glenn glanced at the three incapacitated bullies, and made sure that they wouldn't pose any danger to Chris and Nina. He then turned to the siblings: "I guess you should be okay."

"We are really grateful. I owe you for this, pal!" Chris looked into Glenn's eyes.

Nina, at the time, ran over to Wade and asked him if he was fine.

The dramatic scene was over. The onlookers dispersed.

Glenn went back to his room. As he unlocked the door of his room, a gust of musty air poured into his face. It reeked of fish and seaweed. Glenn grimaced as he was fanning the foul air away with his bare hand. The cabin was small and sparsely furnished. But a bed, a desk and chair plus an oil lamp would do for Glenn.

Glenn sat down and then lit the candle. It was reading time. He pulled out 'A Guide to Meditation and Canine Olfactory Enhancement'.

After over half a month of intense hard work on A Guide to Meditation, Glenn had succeeded in conjuring up magical force and reached a level of somewhere between two and three points.

This was quite a low level. According to the Guide, an ordinary sorcerer should be able to conjure up a magical force that was around ten times the level of his/her mental strength. So, in

theory, 120 points of magical force was a normal level since he was tested at 12 points of mental strength back in Bi Seer City.

“I wish I had a crystal ball. I would be able to see if my mental strength has improved, then, ” Glenn mumbled.

Canine Olfactory Enhancement was much more complex and difficult to understand. It contained a variety of arcane terms and jargons.

The Canine Olfactory Enhancement was beyond Glenn’s comprehension at the time, but he had decided to memorize it all, to get a head start in his future learning of sorcery at the Lilith School of Sorcerers.

Another ten days had passed. A hundred more boys and girls had been admitted to the ship as prospective sorcerers during their stops at the many seaport cities.

The real challenge now had come. The ship was going to be sailing across a deep sea.

The deep seas were mysterious places and many of them remained unexplored by even sorcerers. Legends had been told that behemoth beasts that stalked the gloomy depths would rise up to the sea surface and capsize the ships passing by, with a simple nudge.

“Pirates, there are pirates over there!” A clamor was heard.

Chapter 10: The Magical Stones

It was a cool and crisp evening, and the sea was placid. All of a sudden, there were loud agitated noises coming from the deck. Glenn sped off there to see what was going on.

Far out at sea was a large, two-masted, 90-feet-long, and square-rigged brig, with “the Ocean Dragon” engraved on one side of its hull. The Ocean Dragon was approaching the ship that Glenn was aboard at full speed. Over twenty cannons and many swivel guns were mounted on both sides of the ship. About two hundred men could be seen waving their guns, scimitars, and cutlasses on the deck, and several men were perched on the masts with one hand, eyes intent.

They were all yelling strange words and phrases that made no sense to the students until a man shouted “Avast ye!” as he swung his hand before him. The man wore a poofy lived-in shirt, which was tucked into his ripped black jeans. A few buttons of his shirt were missing, revealing some of his bushy chest hair. The rest of the horde was more enlivened as he howled “Yo Ho Ho!” as an effort to mount the final charge.

Glenn was sure that the ship was a formidable adversary. Many ships would presumably have surrendered to her, without a single shot fired. For the first time, Glenn feared for his life.

“Come have a look! They are pirates!”

“They look so weird.”

The rest of the students didn’t share Glenn’s fear.

It took Glenn a minute to finally come to the realization that he was on a ship that had no chance of ever being defeated by humans. There was a crew of over fifty seamen, who were previously knights. Each and every one of them was strong and fully armed. They were said to have crushed all invaders in their

voyages, not to mention Sorcerer Dior, who could overwhelm even larger and more powerful warships all by himself.

As the ship maneuvered towards Glenn, he noticed that there were no women on the ship. He was then told that a voyage at sea would be cursed with women onboard, a curse where grisly sea creatures would be awakened to hunt you down, suck up your blood and skin your flesh.

And the pirates had not ever been tempted to doubt that.

There was an abrupt stir on the deck of the Ocean Dragon, which kept racing towards Glenn's ship at top speed. Glenn wondered if it was a rebellion against the captain, but in seconds, he decided that it was more likely that they were fleeing, because the man at the helm was fanatically swinging the rudder about after he heard the chest-hair-showing man roaring "come about!" several times.

"Are they escaping?" a student inquired as he was leaning over the bulwark to watch the Ocean Dragon.

"No reason to doubt it," replied the student beside him dully.

The truth was that the captain, the man who wore the puffy shirt, concluded that the ship he was about to plunder was one that belonged to the Lilith School of Sorcerers. He verified the fact not by seeing several dozens of full-armed knights and hundreds of students on the ship, but by the composure on the faces of the knights and the students, who were about to confront a ship of savage pirates.

The second the captain became conscious of the predicament he was in, he shouted the order "come about" to flee from his fate of taking on a ship of sorcerers.

So, a fight that was supposed to be fierce was foiled.

As the pirate-watchers left the side of the ship in their disappointment, a boy and a girl came out of Sorcerer Dior's cabin, which reignited their curiosity.

“Why are they allowed to go into the cabin? How come...?” a student begrudged. “Are they related or are they simply born sorcerers?”

“Don’t you know? They are said to be geniuses. Sorcerer Dior said it himself,” responded another student in a coveting manner.

People on the deck who had been gazing upon the pirates now gravitated to make fervent comments on the two cosets.

The girl was blond and dressed in white. Her hair cascaded down her back like a golden river. Her blue eyes were glowing brightly in the sun, which made them irresistibly charming. She swept her innocent eyes over the crowd, which had been divided into two columns to make way for the princess-like girl. However, her innocence was betrayed by the domineering looks on her face.

Beside her, a boy was toying with a little white rat in his hand and displayed no interest in talking with the hustling and bustling viewers of his. It seemed that his rat had more significance than all of them combined.

“Kyrie, it’s boring. They took flight without a fight,” said the girl as she whipped her hair and left it drifting in the wind.

“Told you. Nobody has the guts to ransack a ship bound for the Lilith School of Sorcerers,” said Kyrie drily. “You insisted on coming. Now what? Shall we please leave this foul-smelling place?”

Irritated by Kyrie’s air of impudence, many students were throwing angry looks at him. But Kyrie ignored them altogether and strutted back to the Sorcerer’s cabin, followed by the pretty girl.

Another big scene was over.

...

Glenn was reading ‘Canine Olfactory Enhancement’ in his cabin when he was interrupted by a knock on the door. He frowned at

the disturbance as he was so absorbed in the book that he didn't want to be disrupted in any way. He was even more vexed by the thought that it might be Robinson, who had been repeatedly annoying him by asking him to hang out on the deck.

It turned out to be Chris and Nina. They had come to visit him to convey their gratitude for Glenn's objection to the Triad's rogue behaviors.

"I just don't know what to say, but you saved my life. You saved my sister's life," said Chris in a manner that was much more adult-like. He had matured a lot after the scuffle he had had on the deck.

And Nina, still rather timid, said in a low voice: "Thanks, Glenn."

Glenn treated the two with juice. The juice could be saved for up to two months before going bad since it was conserved using a special method.

"I was not helpful at all. It was Lafite who took down the big guy." Glenn felt embarrassed at this unjustified gratitude.

"We are truly grateful. You made a difference and what mattered more was what your help represents."

Nina then carefully drew out two stones from her dress and passed them to Glenn.

"Chris and I got some stones by accident when we were young, and they turned out to be sorcerer money – they use them as money on the Sorcerer Continent. They are called the Magical Stones."

'Magical Stones! Sorcerer money. I see. So, the stones that Wade had bribed Sorcerer Dior with were Magical Stones,' thought Glenn, as he accepted them.

Chapter 11: A Disaster At Sea

A storm came as night fell.

Vicissitudes of life had hardened his heart, and now his hatred against the world had morphed to a chilly cold blade that made everyone who had approached him quiver.

He had been in disguise for long and only in dark nights would he strip off that mask.

Sam was sitting in the [crow's nest](#), and was embracing the howling wind whooshing past. Sea water splashed onto him because the sea was churning so violently. Sam had suffered much more when compared to Glenn, an orphan.

A crow's nest is a structure in the upper part of the main mast of a ship or a structure that is used as a lookout point.

Fifteen years ago, on a usual tranquil evening, two black sorcerers came to the town where Sam lived. They captured a great mass of humans as experimental materials, who would then die tragically, and those who had dared fight back were all eradicated.

Sorcerers such as the two who had gone astray on their way of gaining sorcery knowledge would do it at any cost, even if it meant killing their own kind, not to mention a bunch of weak humans. Inconceivable as it may sound, keeping humans safe from attacks and from enslavement of people from the Foreign Land was the original purpose of sorcery.

Sam was among the victims of the brutal act and he was imprisoned in a cage. He was just a little child back then.

The two black sorcerers tested drugs, potions and a great deal of weird things on him over and over again. For every failed test, he would then be sent back to the cage. Days and nights, he witnessed his parents, his friends and complete strangers being tested and die tragic deaths. However, he survived all this, to the astonishment of

the two sorcerers. It had been said that mere one out of 10,000 subjects would have made it out alive from the test table of a sorcerer.

Ten years of eating and defecating in a cage, as well as the torture of hearing constant screaming from the hapless souls, had melted his feelings away and he was now as cold-hearted as the black frozen ice deep within the Weeping Abyss.

His fate turned a few years ago when two Demon-Hunting sorcerers from the Black Isotta School of Sorcerers appeared and killed the two black sorcerers. Sam was then saved, along with the rest of the prisoners. Sam's legendary survival sparked the attention of the sorcerers in Isotta, who ran through several rounds of gene tests and concluded that Sam, to their great joy, was a genius for learning sorcery and, based on his talent, he was very likely to win the Holy Tower tryouts.

Sam had settled in the Black Isotta School of Sorcerers since then and he felt deeply indebted to the kind sorcerers who'd rescued and accommodated him.

An opportunity for Sam to repay his debt of gratitude soon emerged. The school had learned that there were two geniuses on the East Coral Island, which was under the jurisdiction of the Lilith's. And a bamboo telegraph had information that the Lilith's had already recruited them and they were on a ship back to the school.

Driven by the code of conduct of "Survival of the Fittest", the Isotta school had figured out a thorough and dark plan.

"Hoo, Hoo" An owl flew through the storm towards the main mast and landed on Sam's shoulder.

"This ship will reach target waters 7 a.m. tomorrow at the current speed. Spray this into the sea then and your mission will be completed." The owl talked to Sam and dropped a small bag of black powder from its beak into Sam's hand.

“I see,” mumbled Sam as he took the bag, and his grim eyes didn’t move from the gathering clouds in front of him.

The owl then went into Sam’s sleeve.

Glenn had been perusing the Canine Olfactory Enhancement in his cabin all night. The room was brightly lit by candles, so he couldn’t tell if it was already daybreak. He massaged his bloodshot eyes and stretched his body.

“It has been a while since I’ve seen Robinson. Why not go hang around with him for a rest?” Glenn rose up from his chair, and his bones made a burst of creaking sounds.

Hiding the sorcery books and the magical stones, Glenn strolled out of his cabin. Suddenly, a huge sound erupted. It was so loud that Glenn thought it would have brought a house down.

Almost simultaneously, the large ship keeled and gave Glenn a stumble. The first thought Glenn had in his mind was that the ship had struck an iceberg. Then he was jerked out of that thought by a shrieking voice: “Sea monsters! Help!”

Many of the students rushed out of their cabins to see what had happened and what greeted them was an over-eight-foot-long monstrous creature. The thing was creeping on the deck and it had a torso exactly like a human’s while its body’s lower part was that of a snake, yet both parts were covered with dark green scales.

The monster was glaring at the dumbfounded students avariciously, holding, in one hand, a sharp [halberd](#) that was so shiny that anyone at the scene could see the thing’s ferocious face in the blade of the halberd.

A halberd (also called halbard, halbert or Swiss voulge) is a two-handed pole weapon that came to prominent use during the 14th and 15th centuries.

The crowd gulped.

“What’s going on?” More students on the same deck stuck out

their heads from their cabins, which whetted the being's craving even more.

The creeping thing raised its human bust slowly and leapt as it flashed the halberd into a boy's chest, who was the nearest to it. The creature stabbed the unfortunate boy with so much force that the weapon stuck out from the boy's back. The next moment, several segments of intestines were plucked out of the boy's belly as the basilisk drew out the halberd.

Blood spurted and intestines were strewn on the deck.

The sanguinary horror made the students scuttle around in a panic, crying for help. The students who were lodged on lower floors were confused about the terrifying cries, and hustled to have a look.

For an instant, the whole ship fell into disarray.

"Glenn, over here," Chris called for Glenn to come to his room. And Lafite, who was on the same floor with Chris since she had grabbed the fifth-floor room from Andrew, rushed to follow Glenn in. Now Chris and Nina, Lafite and Glenn, along with two other students who had squeezed in, were shouldering against the door with all their might.

Spooked by the bloodbath, Glenn couldn't help shuddering and sweating. And miserable screeches kept coming through the door.

"There must be more than one of that creature." An acute panic ran through his veins.

Chris and Glenn dragged the wood bed, chair and everything in reach, up to the door to weigh in, and after a minute of bustling, the room was submerged into complete silence and nothing, except for the whirring sounds of breaths and thumping of heartbeats, could be heard.

"More than twenty students must have been killed." Chris spoke out his guess of the death toll, at the most inopportune moment.

Then came the whoop of a battlecry and thudding sounds of stamping on the floor. Glenn wished it was the knights who had arrived to take on the sea monsters.

The terrible screams from the students did not subside at all. The knights weren't able to take the enemies down.

Wishes for the knights to make a difference were dashed when the next door was broken forcibly and a boy's life was taken.

No one in Glenn's group dared make a move for the following seconds and their eyes were showing signs of despair.

"Don't worry. We still have Sorcerer Dior. He will..." The student in Glenn's group didn't finish the sentence.

He had been hit by a sharp wood stick, right into his chest and he died without much struggle.

It turned out that as the ship wobbled again after an outburst of a deafening sound, swarms of wood chips were shooting towards them and sadly the boy was hit by one.

More cruel than an instant death was the fact that you had to live in pain.

A stick had plunged into Nina's left eye. Chris held his sister in his arms and tried to soothe her down. Glenn's right ankle and Lafite's left shoulder were scratched, too.

The group crawled up as the wood chip storm ended, and rays of morning sunlight shined before their eyes. It turned out that the hull had been hit broken, and made a hole in it that was around 30 feet wide, and sunlight peeked through it.

In stark contrast with the light, a dark sea snake-like creature, which was about three feet wide in radius, was crawling along the hole up to them.

Now, everyone had lost their remaining glimmer of hope.

Chapter 12: A Little Romance

“I have an idea,” Glenn said cheerfully. “We can’t go on the aisle, so the only hope is to go to the ropes and get onto the deck, which is only 20 to 25 feet of climb.”

“Does it mean that we have to run through the hole that the big bastard is guarding? That’s a suicide jump,” retorted Chris.

“That’s the only choice we have,” said Glenn firmly.

The student who was at the side of Glenn seemed to have been convinced. He dashed to the hole and jumped. Fortunately, he clutched a rope and then twisted his body drastically to move up.

Chris had no choice. He put his sister on his back, caught a rope and began crawling up the rope using his hands.

Glenn and Lafite followed.

Roping up wouldn’t present a problem for the burly Glenn, despite his wounded ankle. But it was a big challenge for the delicately-built Lafite, who had been pampered by her powerful father. But when facing death, she mustered up her courage and jumped.

As the five students were ascending along the rope, three similar monsters burst from the sea surface and started creeping up from the bottom of the hull.

“Holy sh*t! These things aggregate to attack?” yelled Chris, who was fearing for Nina’s life, who had bled out on his back.

A sizzling sound was heard at the time and the roping team shuddered partly out of fear yet mainly because of an actual blast of cold wind. The next second, they found a large stretch of ice sprawling downward to meet the three giant creatures, and overpowering them to shrink back.

As the thick layer of ice was making its way to freeze the

creatures, the sea whirled violently and a giant octopus burst out of water.

“An octopus?” Lafite wondered. “Are the monsters we’ve seen its tentacles?”

The rest of the group’s face fell at Lafite’s wild guess.

At the time, a monster (a tentacle?) had been frozen, so, it lost its grip on the hull. The monster then fell off into the sea and generated a gust of strong wind.

Glenn braced himself and grasped the rope tighter against the high speed gale while the student leading the climbers was blown clean off the rope and whirled into sea; his screaming could still be heard as he dived into sea.

Lafite was swept off the rope, too, and was in a free fall. She desperately worked out the sorcery and conjured up the vine that flew up and anchored itself in a rail of the deck. But the sorcery had to be sustained by her magical force, which would be used up in minutes.

She hung in the air, hair ruffled. Her beautiful face paled out of fear. She knew that she would fall by the minute, and would become the monster’s food, but she didn’t speak out the word “help”, either due to her paralyzing fear or because of her stubborn pride; instead, she clenched her teeth and glanced at the roaring sea.

Chris already had his sister on his back, so he couldn’t take any more of weight.

Therefore, Glenn was the only possibility that Lafite was to be saved from a horrible death.

In a moment of life and death, Glenn decided to take the risk and rescue her, not just because of her charming yet pathetic face at the moment, but because she had never insulted him for his poor parentage.

Glenn took a deep breath, reeled his arm in the rope and descended until he reached a lifeboat in the middle of the hull. He then untied the hooked rope, which was present in the life boat, and swung it towards the vine. After several attempts, Glenn caught on the vine and dragged it to him as close as possible, after which he began to gaspingly lift the vine, the other end of which Lafite was holding as the last straw.

Lafite was dragged to the lifeboat just before the vine vanished. She stared at Glenn, tears in eyes.

Glenn had never been watched this intently by such a beautiful girl as Lafite, so he stroked his nose to reduce his awkwardness.

“Ah,” Glenn chirped.

Lafite had rushed to Glenn and grasped him around the waist, nestling her head in Glenn’s chest.

“I thought I would die. I thought you would not help,” Lafite whispered in Glenn’s ear, weeping.

Glenn was extremely nervous. His body went stiff; his hands were lost for position; So, he just stood there motionlessly and smelled the gorgeous natural scent coming out from her hair.

The two didn’t move until Lafite realized her faux pas and chuckled.

“You wanna hold me forever?”

“No...No...” Glenn stuttered as he released Lafite, and his face turned red.

A little romance had developed in a moment of grave danger.

“Get on my back, and I will get you up to the deck.” Glenn calmed down and got down to the business.

At the time, Chris had already reached the deck and was helping Glenn by pulling up Glenn’s rope. A minute later, Glenn and Lafite were on the deck, too.

But they were faced with an even more horrifying scene on the deck. The 300-foot long deck was potholed everywhere and was littered with over a hundred dead bodies. All the bodies were soaked in blood so much that in no way you could recognize which one was a student's, a knight's or which one belonged to a monster.

And in the center of the deck, a huge tentacle that had been cut off was twitching, and was oozing out cyan and stinky blood.

Another booming sound came. The group tracked it and found that Sorcerer Dior was standing in the air about twenty feet above the deck. His eye patch had been removed, showing a complicated and fast moving mechanic eye.

Dior cast a spell and was freezing a tentacle under his feet, which was trying to attack Dior. The group finally realized that the vast layer of ice had been produced by Dior.

Out of nowhere another big tentacle was swooping at Sorcerer Dior and Dior immediately shielded himself by producing a large and thick ice column before him. The ice column and the flying tentacle met and disintegrated into a pile of ice-chipped minced meat.

Another tentacle came and Dior broke it using the same ice weapon.

And on the deck, the remaining knights were defending the charging tentacles, and to Glenn's amazement, the two students who were in Dior's room were in the fight, too.

Chapter 13: The Sorcerer's Sorcery

Four fighters who were battling below Sorcerer Dior were so brilliant that they wrestled off Glenn and Chris's attention, which had been focused on the clash between ice columns that Dior produced and the tentacles which were trying to take Dior's life.

At the forefront was Legend Knight Barron. Having already pushed one tentacle back, he was brandishing his axe, teeth clenched, eyes fiercely belligerent and pecs swarthy and glossy, ready to crush the next target into pulps.

On Barron's left was the boatswain of the ship. His weapon was a sword. He had patrolled and policed the ship with that ornate leather-bound sword dangling on his waist. But he had never been seen to be engaged in a fight. Now, he was blazing his sword in a flash and truncated a large chunk of a tentacle, which then cowered back in a great pain.

Among the rest of the fighters, there were Kyrie and Bionna, the two geniuses who had stayed with Sorcerer Dior.

Bionna was in the rear of the squad. She was a little nervous facing those giant ugly beasts. But she had not been approached by a fleeting tentacle yet, because the knights in front of her were protecting her. But that protection had been rendered unnecessary.

Between her eyebrows, a golden round ring, like a third eye, caught Glenn's attention. It was said to be an energy source of certain elements. When Bionna focused her eyes for a few seconds on the tentacle, which was pouncing at her, the undulations of energy around her eyes could be visibly seen speeding.

As a result of that stare, the tentacle had become highly dehydrated and then shriveled up into a dead body. And no less than five of that colossus's feet had turned into "mummies".

But that death stare of Bionna's didn't last long. In a few moments, Bionna started panting for air, and the third eye vanished as if it had never existed.

As Bionna bent over for a break from her wonderous sorcery, the little white mouse, which was frolics on Kyrie's shoulder, turned its curious yet caring eyes to her, seemingly unaware of the peril it was in.

And Kyrie himself, who wore his usual presumptuous look, was not even taking the enemies as seriously as the little white mouse did. The look was neither of complacency nor of pride. It was somewhere in between. It was like he had been detached from the earthly delights or sufferings, and were standing above the heavens like an emperor.

What in no way would be penetrated was the arcane sorcery that he was unleashing.

No flashes of arms were seen, nor spells were heard cast, nor blazes bolted, the tentacles that drew near to Kyrie had all been amputated in a weird way. The heads and limbs of the monsters fell to the ground as if they had been lopped off by something, but no movement had been made by Kyrie.

As Glenn was marveling at these invisible killings which were conducted by Kyrie, a tentacle was creeping fast from the hull towards Kyrie, and the most unbelievable thing happened.

As the tentacle erected its cranial part and got poised to charge, it loomed so large that everyone at the scene had believed that Kyrie would be overwhelmed. However, strangely, the whole body of the hulk evaporated in literally a second, except for a segment of a snake's tail now lying on the deck, making a rattling sound. The thicker end of the tail looked like it had been crosscut by an incomparably sharp sword - so smooth and glossy.

"No wonder they have the privilege to stay with Sorcerer Dior," remarked Lafite.

She knew the two students were genuinely great, in terms of sorcery. Although she had been able to use the vine, she had produced it merely through Magical Tools, which her father had bought her. That was essentially not real sorcery and the efficacy of the vine would definitely never run parallel to theirs.

But exercise of such powerful sorcery would require a constant supply of magical force, which, considering their young age, would have been an impossible thing to achieve.

So, both of them had had to rest after several killings.

Going back to the aerial warfare, Sorcerer Dior was facing two gliding arms pouncing at him. His mechanical eye was spinning even faster, but the noise from the rotation was drowned by his whizzing robe in the strong gale.

The color on Dior's face darkened as he was murmuring something. Glenn and Lafite both knew he was going to play the trump card.

“Deathly Flame!” Dior yelled.

Even the knights jerked their heads up.

Dark clouds gathered for a moment, and then dispersed and cleared. And in Dior's hand appeared a ball of grey flame. The flame was neither raging nor did it look fatally ferocious, but it made all things and people on the deck tremble, and it was flickering as if it was catching and feeding on the look of fear on their faces.

What Dior was whispering while he was doing the sorcery ran into the ears of all the students and was ringing so clearly as if Dior had been whispering into the ears of every single one of them.

The two flying arms were then set ablaze and this time, the owner of all these fearless tentacles in the sea made a shrieking sound in an excruciating pain. The screaming was so loud and piercing that you could feel a stinging pain in your ear and your heart.

The octopus broke the surface of the sea, leapt out of the water and then dropped back into the sea that was seething wildly. Meanwhile, all the tentacles engaged in the combats drew back.

“The thing escaped!” A student noticed the beast plowing into the sea and then he exclaimed in delight.

Everyone burst into cheers of joy at this hard-fought battle. Dior, however, raised his hand, on which he had held the fire earlier, and stopped the victorious acclamation.

He then swung a vicious look at the crippled tentacles lying sparsely on the deck and his eyes finally lingered on the tentacle that he had frozen under his feet, as he slowly descended on the deck.

Sorcerers were vicious. Some were not evil in nature, though. But they would kill to gain knowledge that was exclusive to a higher level sorcerer, and in the process, even the ones who had the kindest hearts in the world would become hard-hearted.

“Hah! A leviathan from Hurado, how dare you?!” bellowed Dior after he surveyed the tentacle before him.

“Now behold the revenge since you had no intention to respect the Non-Offensive Agreement between sorcerers and Hurado sea creatures.”

Dior pulled from him a leathered bag, and from it came numerous palm-sized winged black centipedes with gruesome eyes.

“Have a taste of them. The Ancient Sorcerers invented them for you - the Hurado sea monster.”

The half dead tentacle on the deck was too weak to make a move facing the threat. And clearly human or sorcerer language was beyond their comprehension.

The next moment, the plague of centipedes bored their way into the tentacle, through its eyes, mouth, ears and every place that had a hole, right into its viscera.

It was really weird that when the centipedes entered the tentacle's body, they were just babies, but after having their fill, they came out fully mature.

“The Helminths, predators of you Hurado monsters have more of them!” said Dior.

Dior's gloomy look suddenly turned noticeably proud as the tentacle writhed in burning pain and kept banging its thinner part on the deck.

It was said that the Helminths, the natural enemy of Hurado Leviathans, only had a lifespan of one day. But they could and had completed their mission of devouring the leviathan in just half an hour.

Chapter 14: An Unwanted Visitor

Students who had survived the horrible attacks had gathered on the deck, and their faces still looked ghastly. It had been said that the ferocious sea monsters kept killing from the top floor to the third floor before being confronted by the knights. A large chunk of students in the fourth and fifth floors had, therefore, been severely injured or killed, while students at the bottom two decks had had a relatively low death toll.

“Thank God you’re fine! These freaks just scared the sh*t out of me.” Robinson was relieved after finding Glenn and the others of the group.

“And how could I, the greatest student from Tamborosen city, be served as food for these b*tches?” Robinson drew on and began to introduce survivors who were with him at the time.

Glenn for a moment sighed at the decree of fate that Robinson had just been arranged to a lower floor, where living conditions were a little less favorable, and thus had been spared from a gruesome butchering.

Soon, the group went looking for Wade but he was nowhere to be found on the deck. The group thought that he must have gone in the attacks. Contrary to the rescuers’ anxiety, Sam, who was intact, was staring coldly out into the sea, showing no intention to talk with the group.

Robinson satirized in a low voice, “A bootlicker that can do nothing but suck up Sorcerer Apollo and Dior’s asses.”

And Robinson was mad at Sam for a good reason. Ever since Sorcerer Apollo had left for the Underground World, Sam had not treated him nor Glenn nor Lafite seriously, and last time, when Chris and Nina were involved in a fight with the Triad, he turned his back to them.

But Chris was unconcerned with such trivia. He had his sister in his arms, whose eye was badly hurt.

“Don’t worry, my darling. It’s going to be fine. I will ask the finest sorcerer to cure your eye the moment we reach the Sorcerer Continent.” Chris comforted her.

His sister Nina managed a smile on her face and said:

“Don’t try to dupe me. Those sorcerers are not going to treat me for no reason. But it is okay, my dear brother. I can live with one eye. Don’t you see Sorcerer Dior has one eye, too?”

Her mention of Sorcerer Dior brought everybody’s attention to Dior, who had been busy calculating the death tolls. He still hadn’t put on his eye patch, and thus the students could have a closer look at his spinning mechanical eye.

‘How creepy is that! If Nina had an eye like that, how sad would she be!’ the rest of the group thought in their minds excerpt for Chris.

“No! That is not going to happen. I will have your eye cured. I swear!” said Chris determinedly.

Half an hour later, Lafite and her savior Glenn were leaning shoulder-to-shoulder at a mast for some rest.

Glenn was still quite embarrassed about Lafite’s enthusiastic embrace back in the lifeboat, and he couldn’t stop his face from turning red whenever he relived the hug scene. Lafite was a little bashful, too because she had embraced Glenn first.

But both kept silent and sat there quietly, and neither of them seemed to have the intention to mention what looked like a short-lasting illusory romance, despite the fact that they had enjoyed the intimacy.

Then a voice broke Glenn and Lafite’s little affection. A student with the Calamity Report had announced that 32 knights and 107 students had died in the disaster, and a majority of the deceased

students had been from the fourth and fifth floors.

Flanking Sorcerer Dior were the two Legend Knights - the boatswain and Barron. The boatswain was fine but Barron had a deep cut in his shirtless back, but he seemed to be unconcerned about it.

But there was something that he was worried about. He had noticed that Dior was bothered by something, which was betrayed by a little wrinkle on his forehead, a habit that would have been noticed by nobody but Barron, who had been with him for over a decade.

“Master, what’s the matter?” he asked the sorcerer, thinking that now the leviathan had been defeated, then Dior shouldn’t be worried at all.

“Something is wrong with this attack,” Dior said seriously.

“You mean we are being targeted by other sorcerers? And the monsters were given orders to attack us?” Barron had a wild guess.

“It’s likely.”

Barron’s face fell at the comment. As a knight on the Sorcerer Continent, he was fully aware of the serious consequences of being targeted by some sorcerer lurking around, particularly when at sea.

“They did the ‘things’ for you or for the school?” Barron asked nervously.

“I’m not sure, but it may be for them!” Dior shook his head and then threw a glance at Kyrie and Bionna.

“For them?” Barron was shocked at this unbelievable answer.

‘Kyrie and Bionna are great students and have some unusual powers but are these gifts worth such a big fight with a crew of knights and Sorcerer Dior?’ Barron thought in his mind but he restrained from saying it out.

“It’s a guess.” Dior paused for a while, and then continued with a sigh. “My power has been used up in the fight. But we’ve earned some time. Now, we wait and see.”

“But I would need you to do one thing for me if the guess was true.” Dior showed a wicked expression on his face.

“At your pleasure, Master!” Barron kneeled.

Dior inclined his body to Barron and whispered: “Kill Kyrie and Bionna!”

“They are geniuses. Very gifted. That means they are certainly going to win the Holy Tower tryouts. So if we are not going to have them, we should make sure our opponents won’t, either.”

As mid-day drew near, the sun began scorching the deck and hot waves from the sea forced most of the students back to their cabins. And Robinson had come for Glenn and they were resting on the deck.

“Hey, Glenn. Where do you think Sorcerer Dior will live today, since his cabin has been broken? And where will those two?” By saying “those two”, he meant Kyrie and Bionna.

“I don’t know. Probably somewhere on the fifth,” replied Glenn, who showed no interest in the conversation.

“That’s what I thought.” Robinson grinned.

As Glenn and Robinson were chattering on, a shade was cast over them. They were taking relish in the sudden coolness before they heard a flurry of annoying sounds of flapping and croaking. They then turned their head up to the sky.

A person was riding a cloud of crows in the sky.

The person shouted at the vessel after he pulled up over the ship: “sorcerers on board, come out to greet.”

The voice sounded like that of Apollo, which was too hoarse to recognize the sex of the speaker.

Dior appeared on the deck with a stick in his left hand. He looked up at the crow person and immediately figured out who the pretentious stranger was.

“A level two sorcerer!” He went into great shock.

“Haha! There seemed to be some gifted students here. Now I will take the ship. And you, go away!” The person ordered in a manner that showed no respect for Dior.

Sorcerer Dior’s face fell.

Chapter 15: A Harsh Rule

Dior, who was from section 19 of the Holy Tower of Seven Rings, had been widely thought of as a high-rising sorcerer, and very likely to become a level-two sorcerer, after almost a hundred year of knowledge obtaining.

But to fight an already level-two sorcerer? He hesitated with a somber look.

A level two sorcerer's stronger power aside, they typically held managerial positions in their school, and every school's president was in some way connected to the best sorcerers on the Sorcerer Continent. To confront a level two sorcerer might unwisely antagonize his/her school.

And the distinction between a level one and level two sorcerer was huge. When a level one sorcerer had succeeded progressing into a higher level, all of his/her sorceries would be then strengthened to a whole new level, too. The new level would represent an intensification of skills that could be counteracted by no average sorcery tricks nor mere gifts.

Dior was someone destined to become a level-two sorcerer, so he would not be held accountable for giving this ship up, only if this ship had been a common one.

The problem was that the ship was no ordinary one. It had two geniuses onboard, and the point of this recruiting mission by Sorcerers Dior and Apollo had been about getting the two safely to the Lilith School of Sorcerers for the Holy Tower tryouts.

"You may take the ship, but I need to take two people with me," Dior said in faked calmness.

"No sh*t about bargaining. F*ck off or you will get yourself killed," the other sorcerer threatened, and his hoarse voice turned into a snarl.

“Taste this!”

Dior had initiated an attack.

A spear made of ice appeared in front of Dior, and was then charging at the other sorcerer. It was as fast as an arrow that had been shot off the bowstring, and it left a white streak in the air.

Infuriated by being attacked by an inferior sorcerer, the sorcerer on the cloud of crows growled and waved his arm trying to sweep the ice spear off when the spear suddenly broke to thousands of shorter ice spears coming faster at him.

The defender got shocked and even scared for a moment, and he then stamped the crows under his feet so hard that he was sprung to a much higher place to dodge the shower of flying spears.

It was a narrow escape.

Meanwhile Dior had gone astride his stick, which he was holding in his hand, and flew it in the opposite direction to escape.

The other sorcerer chased.

Green, who had watched the confrontation on the deck, breathed heavily:

“It seems that something big is gonna happen.”

A few hours later, the ship went into another chaos. It had been said that Legend Knight Barron had been murdered by Kyrie. Nobody could figure out the reason because a few hours ago, they were fighting together against the Hurado Leviathans.

Glenn had a feeling that it was somehow related to Dior's, but he couldn't think of the exact reason.

As dictated by Dior, Barron had to kill Kyrie and Bionna if there was no guarantee to keep them as students of Lilith School of Sorcerers.

So, when Dior left the ship, Barron went for Kyrie.

Kyrie was idling with his little mouse in his new cabin, and he had had a hunch that something bad might come. So, he had prepared himself for any possible dangers.

As Barron went to his cabin saying he'd like to have a talk with him. Kyrie was on full alert. Barron at the time was holding his sharpened axe behind his back, but he had been kicked by Kyrie onto the ground before he could display the shining axe.

The next minute, Baron flourished his axe at Kyrie for several times, which were either dodged or fended off by Kyrie, who did the defense by grabbing a chair, a lamp, or anything around him.

Noticing that Baron desired to kill him at every stroke, he decided to strike back. That was when Baron was beheaded by Kyrie's sorcery and Barron's neck, without a head on, was just as smooth and glossy as the tentacle being crosscut.

On the following day the crow-riding sorcerer flew back to the ship, and Sorcerer Dior did not. As the rider landed on the deck, the flock of crows broke into two lines and scurried into his loose sleeves.

Everyone onboard was frightened on seeing his face, which was only a piece of skin with no features - no eyes, no nose and no mouth.

"You tykes, embrace Nilmar, the great sorcerer from the Black Isotta School of Sorcerers. Call me Fake Faceless if you'd like to," Nilmar said in a vicious voice.

Everyone's face was bleached.

Nilmar then moved his head around and dwelled his eyes on Kyrie and Bionna:

"Kyrie and Bionna! It's good to see you two."

At the moment, a student elbowed his way through the crowd and came over to Nilmar.

“No way, isn’t that Sam? What is he doing with that crow? Why is he approaching the Sorcerer?” Glenn whispered to Chris, who was beside him with his sister, and who was worrying about her condition.

Sam then handed the crow to Nilmar and said “Master”, as he bowed.

“You did a good job. You helped me take this ship.” Nilmar smiled and put the crow into his sleeve.

The students were greatly enraged at Sam’s betrayal of them, but none of them dared make a sound.

“The Black Isotta School of Sorcerers is where you are going to study. The school follows the principle of “Survival of the Fittest” Nilmar said. “Guided by that principle, I am gonna make a rule for you.”

The students cocked their ears for fear of missing a word of the rule.

“Every day I need to see five students dead. You either kill or be killed. Five! If there is one less, I will kill ten of you. And you will die ugly.”

“Like this!”

Nilmar pointed his finger at a student nearby, who then exploded. His body was blown up so utterly that pieces of meat from his body were spurted onto the students near him. Lafite and Nina threw up at this gory scene.

The deck reeked of blood since it had been sprayed on minced human meat, which reminded Glenn that the bloodbath was real.

After Nilmar’s tirade ended, he pitched a large tent on the deck and called the boatswain in to reroute the ship to the Black Isotta School of Sorcerers.

“That’s ridiculous! Five people daily! In less than a month, over a

hundred of us would have been killed, then.”

“What if we couldn’t reach the school in two months?”

The students who were quick in math were panicked and scowled. But the group suddenly went into silence as a boy made a rough screaming.

That screaming boy had been stabbed by a girl! The girl’s pretty face turned hideous as she said:

“Rhea wouldn’t have died. It was all because of you!” She then repeated the stabbing three times before anyone had the time to stop her.

Everyone had become alert, because they knew that the original purpose of the assassination was to make herself a less likely target. The “Rhea thing” was merely an excuse.

It seemed that a massacre was brewing.

The next morning, the students and the knights appeared on the deck. Only, they had ganged up.

The gangs had formed a ring and in the center of it, two students were lying on the deck, dead. It was no surprise that one of them was the stabbed-to-death boy and as for the other body, no one knew how he had been killed, except the killer.

Then Sorcerer Nilmar showed up. Noticing that there were only two students dead, he lost his temper and shouted, “Three short from what I asked?”

Nilmar moved his arms and pointed at four students in the gang which was beside Glenn’s. The four students were then blown up and this time, the blood almost covered all the students around them.

“This is a warning for disobeying my order.” Nilmar rattled on. “The Black Isotta School of Sorcerers is a member of the Holy Tower of Seven Rings. You may protest that sorcerers are not

allowed to kill humans at will. But let me tell you, from the day you were selected to become a sorcerer, you ceased to be humans. Mind you, the road in front of all of you is never gonna be easy.”

A group of knights went wild and scuttled towards a group of five students, which was standing opposite to them, and which seemed weaker, after Nilmar left for his tent. For a moment, the two groups were engaged in a fiendish fight. But it was lackluster, though. Outnumbered and lacking in sufficient strength, the student team had been routed, and all of them were killed by the cruelty of the knights’ machetes.

“Find five scapegoats among your own people each day or I will,” the man leading the gang of knights threatened, and blood was dripping from his shining machete.

Wade had been confirmed dead in the octopus attack. Chris’ sister’s eye was badly injured and Sam turned to be a traitor. Everything seemed to have conspired to go against Glenn’s group. But Glenn was bothered by a much more serious question:

“Does he have to kill? Would he survive the civil strife before reaching the Black Isotta School of Sorcerers.

Chapter 16: The Weak Get Eliminated

However, the knights' threats had backfired.

“Who do they think they are? A bunch of filthy and stinky lackeys! I just can't believe we had let them kill our own people. They've got only a dozen men. And are we gonna turn in five innocent lives from among us instead of theirs?!”

A student had stepped up and protested in a seemingly righteous voice. His broadsword had been thrust by him into the wooden deck, and it was still swaying with strong force, as a kind of demonstration of resolution.

Despicable as it may have looked, for the boy had not made a sound before the posse of knights had left, the rest of the students, partially inspired, had been rallied by a common goal – not being targeted by the other students at least for a few days.

Actually, the students regarded the knights as inferiors in their mind. They hadn't become a sorcerer but had acquired the pride of one.

The next day, Sorcerer Nilmar had called everyone on board to the deck for a head count of the new dead.

He went into a cackle after sweeping his eyes across the crowd, “Another five gone. Well done! Looks like you've got the hang of it. Keep it going, though, so I can keep my hands clean.” Having said that, the sorcerer headed back to his tent, followed by Sam, Kyrie, Bionna and the boatswain.

Those who hadn't left belonged to two confronting camps, the student camp and the knights'.

In sheer numbers, the student camp had a landslide advantage: nearly 400 against 17.

But it would be a big mistake to conceive that the students could take down the knights easily, because the knights were strapping

in shape and had been seasoned in battles.

Besides, the near-400 student camp were split into several smaller ones, which didn't seem much united, let alone the fact that some of the students knew nothing about fighting at close quarters. Many of them even would not have been selected as students for learning sorceries if it were not for the gold coins or magical stones with which their rich fathers had bribed the interviewing sorcerer.

The knight camp had sensed the aura of hostility and gotten ready for a big fight. Instead of picking on a smaller group and crushing it, as they had done yesterday, the head knight went forward and shouted at the other camp:

“You little brats didn't prepare the sacrifices?!”

“We will not let our own people die. If anyone had to, it would be you!” a student in the middle of the group rattled, but he seemed to have no intention of walking up.

These few inciting words had worked. A couple of students in the forefront were set off and cried “Ah, Ah!” as they dashed at the knights, leaving the rest of their group jostling.

“Son of a b*tch!” the knight being attacked shouted as he had agilely warded off a scythe chopping at him, and then decapitated the student with a wave of the machete in his hand.

The headless body fell down and struggled for a few steps and his head was then kicked back to the camp of the students.

The rest of the few warriors in the stormtroopers, who were unafraid of death, ended up being killed by the knights just in a blink of eyes.

Having been deterred by the gruesome killings, the student group had ceased being aggressive. And a student had been hustled to the forefront and he was facing off the head of the knights.

There were extreme fear and cowardice in the front man's

triangle-shaped eyes and the axe in his hand had kept trembling.

He squinted back to check if there was anyone willing to help, and he became disappointed. What had frustrated him even more was the death of Andrew, a member of the Triad, who had assisted him in bullying Chris and Nina.

Yes, the student at the forefront was none other than the Mouse.

Mouse knew that he had to be on his own, since his protector had gone and no one was going to get him out of the predicament he was in now.

As the chief knight was closing in with the blood dripping machete in one hand, an idea occurred to Mouse, at the spur of the moment. He turned aside, found a female student and hacked her in the head with his axe.

“Bam.” The female fell and hit the floor in no time, and her shirt had been soaked in blood after a few seconds.

“Now we have five. We’ve met the quota of five. No one has to die today!” Mouse exclaimed in an assumed delight.

Quite shocked at Mouse’ reaction, the head knight sneered and led the other knights away.

The murder of the girl by Mouse had infuriated a male student in the crowd, who was believed to have been in a relationship with the girl.

The male student, in his fury, was going to kill Mouse. He was stopped, though, by some students around Mouse.

Every life was now a valuable asset, since the five-dead quota had been met!

That day dragged on and finally came the dusk. Glenn, Lafite, Chris and Nina had stayed in Glenn’s room and no one wanted to be left alone in the face of such an intense situation.

The next day, Sorcerer Nilmar came to the deck, and was

satisfied with the completion of the five-dead-people task by the students, and he instigated them to proceed with the cause.

As Nilmar had left, another fight erupted. The boy who wanted Mouse's life the previous day had come at Mouse for revenge, with a friend. And Mouse had brought a helper, too. It was Barry, another member of the Triad.

The battle was ferocious. Mouse lost out to none in the ability to fight, despite his mouse-shaped small figure. The showdown of strength finally came to an end, when Barry screeched painfully after being stabbed in the back by the boy's friend, and died. Mouse had undergone the same fate, too.

The boy student had avenged the girl whom he loved.

Unfortunately, before he had time to celebrate his victory, he had been stabbed several times in the back, and the stabber had sneaked into the crowd afterwards and disappeared.

Nearly at the same time, Nina had been zeroed in by an unknown student, but the attempt at killing Nina was foiled by Chris, who had constantly been with Nina ever since she was injured.

"How dare you try to hurt her?!" Chris grabbed the bad guy by his hand and threatened.

The bad guy was tall and quite composed. He then made a feint kick on Chris' right knee while he managed to elbow Chris' chin. Chris' head was jolted back up and loosened his grip on the "perpetrator".

The guy slipped. But he had no way of escaping.

In a second, he had found himself tripped by a long and sturdy vine, which suddenly appeared before him.

Chris took the advantage and axed him to death.

The crowd had been much relieved with the finale of the dramatic scene, but more relieved by the fact that the quota of five

dead men had been nearly fulfilled.

And the crowd now was marveling at Lafite. It was she who had produced the vine and entwined the scampering man. Awed by Lafite's mastery of sorcery, few of the students now had the courage to take on Glenn's group.

The knights had heard of Lafite's story and they all looked intense the moment they heard the news.

And everyone on board wished to reach destination as soon as possible. They felt like that every passing day had been hell.

Meanwhile, the crew had been stratified over the days and there was a strict hierarchy in place on the ship now.

Class one – the ruling class – which consisted of, as expected, Kyrie, Bionna, Sam and the boatswain. They were responsible for rationing mushroom soups for the rest of the crew and assisting Nilmar in the head count.

Class two included the knights and Lafite, as well as four others who had mastered sorcery and their sorceries had been brought to full use in the fights over the past few days. No ordinary students had had the gut to mess with the five “sorcerers” and they were nicknamed the “Five Spell Casters!”

The rest of the students were flung to Class three. One terrible problem with that class was that the five dead people had to be chosen from them. That was why they were called by the disdainful knights “the hogs” and the process of killing each other “butchering” .

Thirty days had elapsed and an aggregate of 150 students had been butchered and thrown overboard, which rendered the ship much less crowded. Every student who had ridden through the purgatory now had freezing cold eyes. Smiling was a luxury that you barely had on that ship. Every one of them now was a little devil. They were not young and naive anymore.

At that night, Glenn, Chris and Nina, who had all survived the inferno, partly under the aegis of Lafite, followed Lafite to the deck, and the other four Spell Casters were already there.

It seemed that there was going to be a major and significant meeting.

Chapter 17: The Death Sail League

Lafite was greeted by an enthusiastic boy student, who gestured her to sit by him as he said courtly:

“Oh, Lafite, you are here. We’ve all been waiting for you! Come and have a seat.”

That boy was Aaron, the Fireball Caster of the “Five Spell Casters”.

Aaron was in a big sorcerer-like loose gown. He had a charming appearance with a gentle smile and profound eyes.

However, Lafite didn’t even throw a glance at him. Instead, she said in sarcasm, “Are we acquainted?” as she sat on his opposite and settled herself causally.

“You are such a hostile little b*tch! Just as the rumours had it.” The tenderness on the Fireball Caster’s face changed into a cold sneer, like a burning fire that had suddenly been extinguished.

“You are dead meat now!” Lafite cursed as she cut her way to Aaron and was about to slap him on his face, but Glenn came up and stopped her.

Glenn then stared at Aaron:

“So, you are the Fireball Caster, huh? Something you should keep in mind: everybody alive here is not dumb. Why don’t you just throw away that hypocrisy of yours and get down to real business?” Glenn warned as he was playing with the sharp dagger in his hand.

“Who gives a sh*t to what you think!” Aaron snorted back and then turned silent.

“That’s my boy!” Chris flossed his teeth with his sword, and his burly chest could be seen through the gaps in his ragged shirt.

“Hah-hah, I’ve heard of Lafite’s two strong men. You must be

Chris and Glenn.” A dignitary-looking student with delicate dressing grinned at Glenn and Chris.

That gentleman-looking student was Alastair, the Sword Caster, another member of the Five Spell Casters. Alastair had obtained his title because he could generate from nowhere a golden sword when engaged in a fight. Moreover, he had two shining rings made of sapphire and amethyst on his fingers, from which Glenn concluded that Alastair was far from being simple.

Glenn had been reputed as being sharp-witted and cruel, and six students had died under his dagger over the last month.

A month ago, Glenn was suffering from the prospect that he had to kill to survive on this ship, but now, he had become a hardened “criminal” and would kill without mercy.

“Alastair, state your reasons for calling us here.” A raspy sound came from a girl, who was rather cute-looking, but was actually the cruelest. Glenn had once seen her killing a group of students in seconds by string-pulling a white puppet. Yes, she was the Puppet Caster, Beatrix.

The last member of the Five Spell Casters was sitting near to Beatrix. He looked very gloomy and did not utter a single word. It was so unfortunate that he had lost one of his arms in the fights with the leviathans. Nevertheless, his fighting skills were so fantastic that Lafite had assumed that he might be the only one among the Five Spell Casters who could conjure up real sorcery without using magical tools. Within Lafite’s knowledge, he could use his mental strength to hypnotize his rival, who would then follow his order for a short period of time. That was why he was called the Mind Caster.

Now, the Five Spell Casters, who were the most revered on the ship, excluding sorcerer Nilmar, and possibly Kyrie, Bionna, Sam and the boatswain, had gathered up for something.

Out of the blue, Alastair burst into laughter in an annoying way,

but it had attracted everyone's attention .

“Well, although we have been respected as the Five Spell Casters, but you do know when compared to real sorcerers, we are absolutely nothing. And without the magical tools, we wouldn't have survived for so long...” Alastair shook his head.

“Alastair, stop staying the obvious and get to the point!” The Puppet Caster ran out of patience and cut in.

“Well, then. I will make it very brief. Tonight, we've gathered for a better future - a better future for the rest of the journey and a better future in the Black Isotta School of Sorcerers!” Alastair suddenly looked intense.

“Think about what we all have been through, and how many of us had lost their lives on this vessel, and I'm afraid that our fate would not be improved much in that damn school than it is now!” Alastair talked agitatedly while looking around at the other Casters.

The rest of the Casters gulped and even Glenn was kind of uneasy at this prediction: “Yeah, God knows what is gonna happen in that bloody school!”

Alastair waited a moment before he added something:

“So, I'd suggest that we create a league, a league made up from us and the other students on the ship. We get united to survive this sh*t and when we make it to the school, we act to help each other!”

It seemed that everybody had thought it was a good idea judging from their sanguine faces!

“That is indeed a good suggestion...But how? Five students still have to be killed each day, and how could we possibly rely on each other for survival?!” Lafite doubted.

Aaron was watching Lafite as she was speaking. It seemed that his grudges against Lafite because of her bitter sarcasm had gone. He stared at her in admiration, believing that she was definitely

gorgeous.

“At least we can kill the ones that don’t belong to us first, like the knights!” Alastair said wickedly. “And that could at least win us some time.”

“To kill the knights?” Lafite could scarcely believe her ears.

“Yeah, The knights! There are 17 of them. Their death would allow us to spend the next three days safe and sound...So what do you say?”

“And we Five Spell Casters will be the co-founders of the league.” Alastair bombarded the rest Casters without a second passed.

A moment later came the sounds of the others.

“I’m in!”

“So am I.”

“So am I.”

“Count me in!”

All of the Five Spell Casters had agreed to form a league.

The next day, after the routine head count and weird-as-usual invigoration, Sorcerer Nilmar returned to his tent with Kyrie, Bionna, Sam, and the boatswain.

The atmosphere on the deck suddenly went intense because everyone had to live at the cost of the others’ lives. At the time, daggers had been drawn, swords unsheathed and machetes brandished. The remaining survivors had gotten ready for a routine fatal fight.

They surely had deserved the title of “seasoned” because they had been through at least 30 bloody battles.

“Listen, people!” Alastair’s sudden exclamation had drawn everyone’s attention.

Flanked by the other Casters, he cried:

“We five Casters have decided to establish the Death Sail League! Together we will fight our common foe. Everyone here, if you wanna join us, then join us, and when we reach the Black Isotta School of Sorcerers, we will only accept recommended students.”

The already embattled students were stirred up.

Chapter 18: Arrival At The Black Isotta

School Of Sorcery

Iggy Dan, leader of the knights, had always been prepared for a battle, because he knew that it was their physical strength and aggressiveness that had given them the edge over the students, which had kept them safe during the past month. But there was no way that a knight, even a Legend Knight like Barron, the former leader of the knights on this ship, could stand a chance of beating a sorcerer.

That was not even the worst part. What had bothered him the most was that no matter how strong they became, they were destined to be a servant of some sorcerer. This was a world where sorcerers ruled!

With that in mind, Iggy had been fully aware of one particular thing – the students couldn't be allowed to unite, especially the Five Spell Casters. Otherwise, he and the other knights would be in serious danger.

That was why when Alastair declared the establishment of the Death Sail League, he'd immediately pulled out his machete and led his men up to the students:

“What a joke! Without my permission, there will never be any league.”

Noticing the wavering look on the faces of the students, he exploited the situation and added in a fiercer manner: “Anyone who dares join it will be executed immediately!”

Beneath his veneer of equanimity and ferocity lied a terrified anxiety that he and his men might be exterminated if the students got aligned.

A few of those who had already joined the Death Sail League were standing in the rear of the newly-established league, with weapons

in their hands, watching alertly every move made by the knights.

Alastair, the Sword Caster, who was in the foremost of the team, shouted back at Iggy, “Kill five of your men! You do it, or I will!”

“You will be trampled and crushed! Trust me!” Iggy bellowed.

“You don’t have a chance. You won’t beat the Five Casters.” Alastair returned the threat.

“Well, try us!” Iggy then raised his machete to the air to show that he was not afraid.

“Humph! You still think we are the little kids who were at your mercy a month ago?”

Alastair flashed the brightening sapphire on his finger, murmured a spell, and a golden sword appeared in the air and shot towards Iggy.

Although Iggy was swift enough to avoid the deadly attack, he still got scratched in the right arm. Meanwhile, a white puppet swooshed towards Iggy as fast as a beam of light and dug out his heart.

The “battle” took less than ten seconds.

The 20-inch-tall puppet in pure white that had ended Iggy’s life looked like an innocent girl, only with a gory human heart thumping in her hands.

Iggy’s body collapsed, producing a booming sound. The noise scared the white puppet, which fled away like a girl who had been caught stealing candies.

At the same time, Glenn, Chris and Lafite had made a good team. Lafite flung out the vine for the trapping and the other two were charged with slitting the throats.

Soon the skirmish had ended with the Death Sail League’s complete success. The knights had encountered a debacle, with seven dead, nine seriously wounded and one in a coma. On the

Caster's side, only Chris was slightly injured in the arm.

Although Alastair felt that it was a little pity that the death toll of the knights had exceeded five, but now everybody was in a joyous mood and didn't seem to care much.

As a result of the victory, all the students could hardly wait to join the Death Sail League, which brought the Five Spell Casters to great satisfaction.

Informed of their duties and responsibilities, the students who applied had been admitted as official members of the league. They seemed so relieved that they were making jokes at the knights alive, who had been tied up.

"How did you use to call us? Hogs? Wow, look who are the real hogs now."

The students had hope now. It was not only because of the knights being routed so that they would be safe in the next few days, but because of their way of beating them – sorcery. That was something that belonged exclusively to sorcerers and was far beyond the knights' reach! And one day, with sufficient knowledge and practice, they would become a sorcerer.

With relaxed laughter coming from every corner of the deck, the vessel seemed to have come back to life.

The following morning, everyone had gathered on the deck for the routine head count.

"Hah, seven missing. That's weird, but whatever," said Sorcerer Nilmar as he looked around at the students who, at this time, had become a whole new group of people. They were in a league and in high spirits!

It seemed that neither Nilmar nor Kyrie and Bionna had noticed the nuanced change in the students' mood or they didn't care anything that was related to, in their eyes, lower ranks of students.

But there was someone who did care - Sam. He was somewhat

worried about the weird change in the crowd as he ran his eyes across the Five Spell Casters.

And the boatswain turned livid when he learned the news that seven knights had died, since they were all his followers. But in Nilmar's presence, none of them were courageous enough to make a complaint.

While Sam and the boatswain were in their deep thoughts, sorcerer Nilmar broke the silence:

"Now, I have a ba~d news for you..." Nilmar dragged and accentuated the syllable "a" in the word "bad".

Hearing that, the students' nerves tightened because that morbid and evil sorcerer could do anything to them—the death quota to name one—and subconsciously, everyone in the crowd took a step backwards.

"The ba~d news is..." He smirked, taking delight in the grim looks on the students' faces, and suddenly raised his pitch and said:

"We are arriving at the Black Isotta School of Sorcerers this evening. Hah, Hah, how does it feel? So bad, huh?"

Everyone cursed Sorcerer Nilmar in their mind.

"We finally reached the school?! This damn torture has ended?!" The students still couldn't believe the news.

A month of barbarous fights must have been engraved on every student's heart, and they believed they would never forget this terrible and horrible experience. It had taught them how much it would take to become a sorcerer and how much they wanted to be one.

For the rest of the day, with no need to kill since there were still ten knights tied in ropes, most of the students had let their guard down, and were reposing against the rails, gazing out into the distance and enjoying the special cool breeze from the sea.

At sunset, the ship was skillfully anchored at the port. A two-month voyage was finally over.

Countless crows poured out of sorcerer Nilmar's robe and raised him up into the air. In his typical coarse voice, the sorcerer declared proudly:

“My little fellas, welcome to the Black Isotta School of Sorcerers!”

Chapter 19: The Black Tower

As the students were disembarking the ship, they found some other ships were anchored at the port, too. However, their ship stood out because none of the ships could compare to it when it came to how wrecked a ship could be. That it could carry them safe here had been a miracle considering that it had suffered a score of hits from the multiple-tentacled octopus.

Hardly had the vessel reached ashore when the students rushed onto land in rapture, for they had finally gotten rid of a terrible journey.

“See, just another batch of hicks from some outpost islands who believe they could become a sorcerer someday. How naive they are!” Two students from the Black Isotta School of Sorcerers had come to welcome sorcerer Nilmar back and ended up mocking Glenn and the rest of the Death Sail League.

The two snippy students came over to greet Nilmar, but were ignored. Instead, Nilmar turned back and warned the students, who came fresh off the ship, to not screw around.

Quicker than a human’s eyes could tell, an old witch flew a broomstick to the crowd and hovered over their heads. She then took a direct glance at Kyrie and Bionna, who were behind Nilmar, and said contentedly:

“So, these two lovely kids must be the two geniuses who’d been selected by the Lilith School of Sorcerers, aren’t they? Well, Well. Just as expected, their soul waves are so extraordinary.”

The old witch burst into a high-pitched and exaggerated laughter, which turned her already wrinkled face into an old, bumpy tree bark. Besides the wrinkled face, she had yellowish decayed teeth. Anyone who caught a glimpse of her would feel sick.

“Does a sorcerer have to look like that? And will I?” Glenn was worried and subconsciously, he peeped at Lafite’s pretty face and visualized her with that withered face and shrunk figure.

“Haha, were you peeping at me? Am I beautiful?” Lafite raided Glenn with a surprising query.

“Yeah, you look astounding,” replied Glenn, feeling guilty of that stealthy glance. “Whoever has you as his wife will be the luckiest man in the world.” He couldn’t believe he had completed that sentence without a pause.

“So, is it a proposal? If it is, I will consider it.”

“Na...a...y” Glenn stuttered. He would have said yes because he had had that feeling that she was the right girl for him ever since their “lifeboat romance”. But he slipped out “nay” because he had thought it was one of the practical jokes of hers.

Lafite couldn’t believe she had asked such a lusciously flirty question herself. It was probably because she had been emancipated from the depressing life at sea and now she finally had an opportune moment for ventilation.

“These little kids have survived the Leviathan attacks. I believe some of them may achieve something here,” Sorcerer Nilmar said to the old witch.

“So what? That doesn’t concern me. The only ones I care about are these two kids,” the old witch snorted as she snatched Kyrie and Bionna onto her broom.

“Nilmar, you are so laid back. I would have sailed the ship back in less than a month.” The old witch flew away the moment she finished the sentence.

“In less than a month? Would she fly the ship?” Chris grunted at the cocky comments.

Nina pulled her brother’s shirt to hint that he should refrain himself from saying anything extravagant.

“She meant throwing all of us overboard if she had been the one picking us up. We wouldn’t be a liability then.” Lafite’ explanation made Chris, Nina as well as Glenn, who were next to her, break out a cold sweat on their foreheads.

And for a moment, they were all thinking about Sorcerer Apollo, who had gone to the Underground World, and wondered if it might have been a polarizing experience in the Lilith School of Sorcerers.

“The new term is only half a month way. You two lead them to school and accommodate them.” Sorcerer Nilmar turned to the two students who had come to welcome him.

As Sorcerer Nilmar had left with Sam driving the flock of crows, the boy from the two students, who was tall and bald, was finally bereaved of the serious expression he usually wore in the presence of a sorcerer, and he said in despise:

“You’ve beaten the Hurado Leviathan, huh? Look like you’ve got your brains!”

These few mean words reminded the 300 or so students that the Black Isotta School of Sorcerers might be a place of no good.

“Now about some basic rules,” he rattled on as he stroked a centipede-shaped scar above his left eyebrow.

“Attending the Black Isotta School of Sorcerers doesn’t guarantee you the title of a “student”. You will be graded as a “novice” until you can independently conjure up three sorceries.”

“Hence, from now on, there are two things you are supposed to do: first, improve your mental strength; second, learn more sorceries.”

“Stop being the good guy!” The girl, who was standing beside him, broke in.

“You guys, listen! Homicide is strictly prohibited inside school. But mind you, as long as the bad guy does not get caught on the

spot or leave no evidence, the Law Enforcement Team (LET) would turn a blind eye to it. So you'd better behave yourself, or you will be crushed to death just like cockroaches," the girl threatened.

To her disappointment, no "novices" from the Death Sail League reproached her, something that she had expected, because she thought it would have been a good timing to establish her authority by punishing a novice who would revolt against her.

After a baptism of war, it seemed that most of them had learned to control their tempers.

"Let's go!" the bald boy howled.

After half an hour of hiking, the crowd arrived at a huge mountain.

It was dusk. So, only a silhouette of the mountain could be seen. But you could still tell that it was so craggy that it almost ran vertical and you could see all the giant rocks crouching on it. Straps of swarthy chains were dangling from the top, emanating a sense of depression as if it was overlooking the arrivals.

Since the two students heralding the way seemed to not intend to bypass the mountain, members of the Death Sail League couldn't help guessing that the Black Isotta School of Sorcerers was on the mountain, but one question that baffled them was how to get onto it, considering its steepness.

"Coo-coo..." An owl flew past them.

The leading boy suddenly stopped and turned back. He snarled at the students:

"Here's a thing. Never try to hinder the owls when they are on school businesses, no matter what means you use, or you will be held accountable. Believe me, you will definitely regret it. The LET will cut no slack!"

The students were shocked, but they were somewhat grateful for that warning.

Minutes later, they had arrived at the foot of the mountain. The students now had a closer look at the mountain. What had drawn their focus were the enormous unknown types of trees on it, which, under conservative estimate, would measure nearly two hundred feet tall. Tree leaves were rustling in the wind as if they were people conspiring creepy things.

But still, how were they supposed to climb that precipitous mountain?

At the time, the boy stepped over to a tree and bowed in respect: “Please open the gateway!”

Slowly the tree bark moved and twisted itself before transforming into the shape of a human face with complete features. The bark face stared at the boy sluggishly for a second and then closed its eyes.

Glenn noticed that the face merged back into the tree.

“BANG!” a huge sound thundered.

A gigantic rock at the foot of the mountain moved and slowly disengaged from the other rocks as three tinkling chains lifted it upwards. In less than a minute, the rock had rumbled up around twenty feet high, displaying a spacious tunnel.

Passing through the tunnel, dozens of brightly-lit buildings came into view. But they were hugely dwarfed by a high-rising and magnificent-looking tower.

“Wow, that must be the Black Tower!” a student shouted in awe.

While every student had been attracted to the Black Tower, Glenn noticed a stone tablet on one side at the end of the tunnel.

The mossy stone itself was nothing special, and the characters that had been inscribed on it were barely legible.

Still, with an effort, Glenn recognized them:

“With my knowledge, give me a fulcrum on which to place it, and

I shall move the world!”

Chapter 20: Establishing Turf

The Black Isotta School of Sorcerers was located on the western coast of the Sorcerer Continent, and its west was cut off by Chains Mountain, the one that provided the gateway to the school. Beyond the Chains Mountain was the Gem Sea. Miles eastwards from the school was the famous Holy Tower of Seven Rings, but to get there, one had to go through the Bramble Forest.

It had been fifteen days since Glenn was admitted to the school, and he had grown familiar with the school's layout. All the school buildings centered on the over-a-hundred-tiered Black Tower, the lowest seven floors of which were accessible to students and novices while the higher storeys were reserved only for sorcerers. And the three major public places for the sorcery-learners were lecture halls, a library and a common house.

It was the first day of the new term today and also the day on which all sorcery schools' new term on the Sorcerer Continent commenced. The Black Isotta School of Sorcerers enrolled new students only once in a decade. Theoretically, each school had their own sphere of influence and would select students within their boundaries. Apparently, the Black Isotta school had breached limits and ransacked Kyrie and Bionna.

Heralded by the second-year students, novices from the human world poured into a grand square. They were all admiring the architectures and facilities around them and some had been inspired to declare that they would be the greatest sorcerer in sorcerers' history.

The members of the Death Sail League were among them and they behaved much reserved, because it seemed that they had grown too mature to care about such vague and insubstantial things.

In about ten minutes, nearly two thousand kids had been lined

up on the smooth granite floor. In front of them, a dozen sorcerers were sitting before a long board. The pupils had to hold their head high to look at them, because the long board was placed on a trestle that rose high into air. The sorcerers wore loose robes and were invariably staring at the board as if it held a huge secret.

There were barely any formalities to go through or etiquettes to follow.

The pupils, which included both students and novices, listened intently as the twelve sorcerers introduced the school rules, the challenges in the pursuit of knowledge and a three-year span of preferential treatment.

During the preferential treatment period, pupils would receive two magical stones as a monthly allowance and would have no compulsory missions for the first three years. After that, the First-Years Sorcery Test would be held, in which a great deal of students and novices would die or be knocked out of school.

As for the exact use of magical stones, Glenn had learned from Chris and Nina that they were sorcery money. And according to the talking sorcerers, the magical stones were needed to borrow books or even take a lecture. It would cost one stone for borrowing a book for a week from the library and half a stone for a lecture given by a sorcerer! The sum of stones that all sorts of experimental materials would cost varied significantly. With enough stones, you could even purchase Magical Tools, like the one Lafite had been using to conjure up the vine. Stones were also required by pupils if they wanted to ask questions to a sorcerer.

The last speech-giving sorcerer on the trestle was talking eloquently, and he concluded his statement with a positive note:

“But there is good news for you. You each will be given a crystal ball and seven lectures on sorcery for free, a reward from the Holy Tower of Seven Rings.”

Everyone broke into a rapture, although most of them had no

idea what the Holy Tower of Seven Rings represented.

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Three days had passed. It was the first official school day.

Glenn, Chris, Nina and Robinson had settled themselves in a front row of Lecture Hall nine. The hall was packed, but they scrambled and scored the seats.

“Let me tell you a little secret. I bet you must have well observed the owls that whiz around the school. They are actually spies working for the LET. I overheard it from a senior,” Robinson who was sitting behind Glenn chattered.

Robinson wasn't on Glenn's team back on the ship, because he had made some new friends and ganged with them. But, he had been hanging around with Glenn ever since they set foot into the school.

“And it's said that there are two places you are strongly advised not to go. One of them is the “Wildness Yard”. It is a duel arena where LET regularly come to collect the dead bodies of the losers.” Robinson licked his lips in a proud air.

“The other one is a place I bet you would never go. It is the water tower in the furthest south of the school. Weird things happen in there. If you go there by yourself at night, you might be lucky to catch sight of one.” Robinson enticed Glenn by giving him a nudge.

Glenn pouted disapprovingly, contemplating that the weird things in Robinson's eyes might just be tricks of sorcery.

About a quarter of an hour later, the Hall had been crammed to the walls, and no unoccupied seats could be found. Robinson was still gossiping about school news when someone grumbled in a piercing voice:

“Not a single seat left! Why did you tarry on the way here?”

The one who came into view was a bang-haired brown girl who

was wearing a black dress, in stark contrast to her white skin. She walked into the hall in a dignified manner. A circlet of pearls on her hair was gleaming after reflecting the lights, adding to her graciously tender figure.

The boy who was being berated became embarrassed for he had miscalculated the availability of seats. However, he did not have any intention of displaying weakness in front of the girl he fancied. Instead, he turned to Chris and Nina, who were in the front row, and yelled at them to give up their seats, and in the meantime, he gestured to several pupils in the back rows to come for help.

As the helpers were forcing their way to Chris and Nina, Lafite who was in the row behind Chris', pounded the table in her wrath and rose up abruptly.

“You sure you are talking to us?”

At the time, Glenn also stood up to pitch in for a stronger lineup. After a month of life or death battles together, the group had developed some sort of unbroken bond of friendship. But, one couldn't rule out the probability that Glenn did that solely for Lafite. And Chris himself bickered back.

The student who was sitting next to Chris scooted two seats away from him as if to draw a line between Chris and him. A girl in the forefront, who had turned back to relish in a quarrel, suddenly covered her mouth with her hand in a panic, when she saw Lafite acting defiantly against the notorious seat-seeker.

The girl's eyes were nervously dilated as if to say “Lafite is a goner now.”

The seat-seeker quickly noticed that the group were all dressed in a manner that was setting off a vibe of “peasants” except for Lafite who was, in his opinion, less lousy.

“Yes, I am asking you b*tch to take a roll! Now get out of the way, or I swear you will die in less than half a year,” the boy threatened

as he overlooked Lafite.

“Trust me. I will definitely ask a senior boy to teach me sorcery and I will then get them!” the boy said triumphantly to one of the pupils who had squeezed their way before him.

“Hah? Less than half a year! Then I will wait and see who survives whom.” Lafite’s anger not abated, she pounded the table again and watched the boy provocatively.

“You wanna play with fire. Let’s-”

The tough words didn’t have the time to burst out before the boy was slapped hard on the face by somebody that no one in the hall could have expected as the perpetrator.

It was one of the seat-seeker’s men who had slapped him.

“What were you doing?!” He raged so much that the veins in the front of his neck could be seen swelling.

“No, I-I didn’t mean it! I didn’t k-know. I was controlled by something,” the slapper stammered.

“What are you talking about?” The seat-seeker’s face was twisted in pain.

“Haha! He is talking about hypnotization and mental control. I am the Mind Caster. The Death Sail League is establishing its turf.”

Chapter 21: The Fulcrum

It turned out that the Mind Caster, co-founder of the Death Sail League, had controlled the mind of one of the seat-seekers' lackeys by hypnotizing him. The boy who had been slapped in the face was really frightened when he became aware of the strong power of "mind casting". And the rest of the students in the lecture hall were all whispering about the Death Sail League, which they had no knowledge about.

As the Mind Caster declared that he would establish turf, almost instantaneously, around eighty novices stood up and stared gloomily at the slapped boy and his men.

It seemed that the Death Sail League was massive already.

Threatened by a prospect of a good beating, the boy's voice softened as he wondered why such a formidable league already existed among the new novices since it had been merely three days since the term began.

"Hey. I'm Thomas. I didn't mean to wrestle the seats off your men. But I am sorry," he said as he trotted up to the Mind Caster.

At the time, Nina noticed the fierce expression on Lafite's face and she was afraid that Lafite might go overboard cruelly as she did back on the ship. So, she reminded Lafite:

"Lafite, it would be better not to kill him, or you might not be able to get away with it. The LET would look into it if someone die in a public place."

The warning was uttered in a quite low voice but it clearly had been caught by Thomas who, as a result, gravitated from the Mind Caster to Lafite and implored her to condone his rogueries.

"I am not intending to do that," said Lafite to Nina reassuringly.

In no time, Thomas displayed to Lafite his gratitude for not being killed by bending his body and keeping his head deeply down. He

assumed the best piety that a man could present for fear of Lafite retracting her words, while he was abusing the Death Sail League in his mind:

“Humph, even I don’t have the privilege to kill yet, let alone a huddle of useless and witless pariahs. How dare you threaten me?” Thomas continued as he lowered his head further. “And the sh*t sail league of theirs will perish in no time.”

Alastair, the Sword Caster, who had been with the Mind Caster, responded to Lafite by shaking his head and curled his lips:

“He will not be spared,” Alastair snarled. “The Death Sail League is setting its turf and this is a good time to scare off those that stand in the way. Besides he picked on us.”

“Then I will do it,” the Mind Caster said lightly and then continued. “And I hope the Jinxing Division guys of the League will be ready soon.”

Before Thomas could predict what would befall him, he had been punted into the air and slumped into the seats two rows back, with his face hitting hard on the desktop. He then cowered on the desk board as his face blanched with complete fear.

“This is just a warning. If you wanna go the hard way, then we will.”

It turned out that Glenn had acted before the Mind Caster and did the punching, because he thought that the Mind Caster was crueller than him and an excessive punishment on Thomas might lead to some severe consequences from the LET.

As the fighting scene drew to an end, the girl who was pursued by Thomas requested remotely to Alastair, who was standing opposite to her, for permission to move to the other column of rows in the hall, after throwing a look of contempt at Thomas as if his life or death did not concern her at all.

Alastair started surveying the girl who had made the request at

the most improper moment, and in a second, the murderous look on his face vanished, and he said in a manner of a gentleman's:

“Of course you may, my Lady!”

The dust settled and everyone returned to their seats, awaiting the first class of the Black Isotta School of Sorcerers.

A staccato beat that belonged exclusively to high heel shoes was echoing off of marble floors and granite walls, seconds after the class bell rang. A moment later, a female dressed in white strode into the lecture hall. She had bare shoulders as white as snow, amber-colored captivating eyes and a nice body - the picture of a mature and sexy woman in her early 30s.

“I am Elaine, teacher of Fundamental Sorcery. Together, we will have the seven free lessons,” the woman introduced herself in a posh voice.

Glenn was pleased. His anxiety of becoming a strange-looking man, which was produced on seeing the groom-flying wrinkle-faced sorcerer, was dispelled, because a more than normally-shaped sorcerer now stood before him. And the other novices in the hall were marvelling at her beautiful appearance, too.

The teacher perceived the unusual attention from the students on her face and explained briskly:

“Haha, the withered-face sorcerer has scared you that much, huh? But there is no need to worry. You will not become like that if you don't practice the Hematology Sorcery. It's a strong kind of sorcery which spikes up your power within a very short span of time, but with a side effect - it erodes your mind and deforms your face a little bit.”

The whole class was relieved that a disfiguration was not an incidental cost of all sorceries.

Out of nowhere, the teacher had had a black centipede between her fingers and put it into her mouth.

“Ewww!” Sounds of retching erupted sparsely as the teacher munched the centipede.

“Don’t make a fuss! This is my Symbiotic Insect. Don’t think light of it. The Symbiotic Insects are a must-have if you do not desire to be jinxed or cursed to death. Besides, the Symbiotic Insects are not as gross as you think. They are a symbol in the endless world and a part of the ecosystem,” the teacher expounded elaborately.

“Enough on the Symbiotic Insect. Now let’s talk about what a real sorcerer is or what distinguishes a sorcerer.” She continued enthusiastically.

“With my knowledge, [give me a fulcrum on which to place it, and I shall move the world!](#) This was said by Antonio Berner, one of the forefathers of this school. And I will show you what that fulcrum is.”

Giving someone the proper tools and opportunities to use his knowledge can make a person become someone amazing and unleash his/her potential and change the world.

“Look, here are three identical magical stones, and they contain same amount of basic energy - that’s seven degrees.”

The teacher then chanted something in a low voice and the crystal ball began to levitate into the air.

Elaine then stroked one of the stones on the desk before her, which was covered by something like a halo after the stroke. She then flung the stone towards the crystal ball, and it exploded the moment it hit the ball.

But all the broken shards of the stone were then enclosed by a container.

“Don’t make a fuss. This is the Enclosure. It appears itself to wrap up the shards of the shattered stone when it explodes.”

A few words appeared on the frontal surface of the crystal ball.

“The ball will measure the energy the stone has now,” said Elaine. “Three degrees! It received an attack with only three degrees of energy. Conclusion: poor handling, less energy!”

“Now, have a look at this.”

Elaine then picked up another stone and haloed it. Strangely, the halo flew into her through her mouth slowly. As the flow completed, she chanted something in the same low voice and the stone turned into a fireball and started burning in her hand. She then tossed the fireball onto the crystal ball and it exploded, producing a much louder sound and a rampant fire. The broken pieces were again confined by the Enclosure.

“Forty degrees! Yes!” Elaine exclaimed. “This time the energy in the stone is magnified over 13 times by changing it into a flame.”

Elaine also experimented with the third stone where the same fire ball emerged, but it then transformed into a bird of fire and produced 66 degrees of energy.

“See? This is what a fulcrum means. A stone that has seven degrees of basic energy is levered to 66 with the right fulcrum. This is power!”

During the whole process, the class was very engaged. Although many of them were just marveling at the levitation, the transformation and all, regarding them as sorts of chemical experiments, but Glenn was truly thinking.

“With my knowledge, give me a fulcrum on which to place it, and I shall move the world!”

Chapter 22: Two Years In The School

Time passed. Glenn had been in the Black Isotta School of Sorcerers for two years. The First-Years Sorcery Test was only one year away. Being jested as the Gory Test, it was actually a killing machine for the novices. Even for the students or those who had learned at least three sorceries, only one out of ten of them could make it out alive.

That was the reason why Glenn had been moping around these days. For the two years he had been in school, the only sorcery he had gained mastery in was the “Canine Olfactory Enhancement”, which, ironically, he had studied before he came to the school. However, he had been obsessed with the “with enough knowledge and a fulcrum on which to place it, and you shall move the world” principle. Instead of following the more common course of action of pursuing practical skills, as most of the other pupils had done, he had been devoted to seeking the ultimate truth behind the Canine Olfactory Enhancement. But it had proved to be a mere waste of time.

Actually, Glenn had every reason to make advancements on his way of becoming more powerful. For one thing, he was talented and had no scarcity of magic stones, which would surely get him many of the materials needed to gain new sorceries. As for the sufficiency of stones, he was doing a part-time job as a cleaner in the library, which, surprisingly, was much sought-out, thanks to the connections of the Death Sail League. This job guaranteed him two magic stones each month plus the two stones from the monthly allowance.

And he had comprehended one particular issue about the Canine Olfactory Enhancement: The Olfactory Enhancement did not fall into the domains of Hematology Sorcery.

“Am I wrong for digging deeply into it? The Canine Olfactory Enhancement and Odor Mapping used to be my advantage, but

now there is nothing to be proud of!” Glenn couldn’t stop blaming himself.

However, his thought was suddenly interrupted by a miserable screaming: “No...”

Glenn tracked the screaming and rushed to the spot, only to find that a girl was rolling on the ground in severe pain, and there were several bystanders who were watching.

Taking a further look, Glenn recognized that the girl rolling on the ground was Linzi, who had gained her fame because she was one of the first ones that had been accepted as a “student”, after ranking up from being a novice.

It could be estimated by the way of her writhing that she might have been cursed - a manner of killing that had obtained its popularity because of the ease of eluding the investigation from the LET.

Cursing someone had two essential prerequisites. First, the person being targeted had not raised a Symbiotic Insect prior to being cursed. Despite the disturbance that might be caused by infesting insects on your body, Symbiotic Insects could serve to protect their host from being cursed or from being controlled through other mental manipulations.

The Symbiotic Insect was said to be the preliminary application of soul energy. Part of the host’s soul energy would be transferred to the insects the person raised, and therefore, the “energized” insects were able to perform a defensive function, including reinforcing the host’s resistance to being controlled mentally by the attacker.

The second thing for a curse to take effect was the access to the target’s personal information, which included a drop of his/her blood, a nail or a hair and in certain cases, the things that the victims had touched would do if the curse-caster had been extremely good.

And the victim would die in various ways. Once, a novice was suddenly overrun by a swarm of unknown insects which fed on human flesh and was nibbled away. In another, it was rumored that a novice was suffocated to death over dinner because her blood had suddenly stopped flowing. And once, there was this novice who kept shrinking as he was losing all of his body fluids, and he was shriveled into a mummy.

It seemed to Glenn that curses could not be lifted and he, along with other watchers, was wondering how Linzi would die. They had witnessed too many cases of people being cursed and the tragic and usually odd deaths had rarely been rendered as a conversation topic.

That was when Linzi's crying became more dreadful and a smell of charred meat was sniffed.

"Wow, it is the Spontaneous Combustion Curse. That's a capital one!" a boy from the watchers exclaimed.

Linzi was then burnt to cinders in a few minutes.

At that night, the Death Sail League called an assembly. It should be noted that the Five Spell Casters no longer ruled the league due to the accidental deaths of the Fireball Caster Aaron and the Puppet Caster. Instead, there were now the meritocracy-based Twelve Superiors who held the highest positions, including the three remaining Five Spell Casters.

Glenn and his little fellas were at the assembly. But Glenn was rather frustrated because his friends, gifted or not, had all been making great progress in acquiring sorceries. Even Nina, who was still miserable due to her injured eye, had managed three sorceries, which were essentially auxiliary, giving rise to the fact that she and Chris now made a strong team that even matched a senior student in a fight.

"Hey, Glenn, would you like to come with us to the Bramble Forest tomorrow? You'll surely get some magic stones as a reward

like we did last time!” Chris whispered.

“No, I’d better not. I will hold the group back!” Glenn pretended that he had made peace with the fact that he was a liability. With a glance at Chris, he continued, “Now even your little sister is better than me.”

Looking rather concerned, Lafite cut in:

“Glenn, stop that nonsense! You are good. It’s just that you need to get back on track. What you need for now are two more sorceries, not more rumination on that olfactory book.”

“She’s right, Glenn. Sorceries are more urgently needed!” Nina added in a low voice.

“Emm...” Glenn was about to respond when he was suddenly cut in by a boy with a bushy beard named Armida. Armida was one of the Twelve Superiors and was a big pursuer of Lafite.

“Can’t you guys give him a break! ” Armida threw a look at Chris and Nina and fixed his eyes on Lafite. Afterwards, he turned to Glenn.

“There, there. Everything is under control. You are a friend of Lafite, and that means you are a friend of mine. I can assure you that.”

Glenn felt a twinge of pain on hearing these kind yet overbearing words. The magnanimity and generosity of their friends were in some way a charity to him. In his eyes, Glenn felt as if he was being treated as a loser, and they were doing it just for the qualms of their conscience.

One of the Twelve Superiors was presiding over the assembly. He was giving a speech with a passionate strenuousness.

“The Death Sail League has grown into a big one. We now boasts 217 members in the league, and the volume has helped us rank 5th among all of the leagues in the Black Isotta School. I am proud to say that a whopping 205 of the total members have been accepted

as “students” and, amazingly, 17 have been recognized by sorcerers because of their potential or ability and thus have even been admitted as mentees of the sorcerers.”

Glenn’s heart broke into pieces, and although the Superior was rambling on, he couldn’t hear a word at all.

“Once, I was gifted. Now what? A loser? One of the worst 12 novices who can’t get three sorceries?”

After the assembly ended, Glenn was on his way back to dorm, his eyes downcast. Robinson was with him at the time, who, surprisingly, kept silent along the way.

As they drew near to the dorm, Robinson erupted:

“Who does that stupid Armida think he is? He’s such a shameless guy! How dare he talk to you like that? I just wanted to give him a good beating. Oh, there’s definitely no way that he would think you and Lafite are just friends, right? He knows nothing about what you two have been through together! That dumbass! ”

Glenn looked at Robinson, whom Glenn had thought of as an incurable headache because of his garrulousness. Glenn felt that his “[wind bag](#)” property and his “[betrayal](#)” were rendered inconsequential because of his understanding of Glenn's heart at the time. As a result, Glenn was so deeply moved that he almost couldn’t hold back his tears.

“Wind bag” refers to someone who is too talkative.

“Betrayal” refers to the fact that Robinson deserted Glenn’s group back on the ship.

“Robinson, thanks. But I want to be alone for a while. Please!” Glenn turned around to hide his tears, which had made their way out.

Without uttering a word, Robinson patted Glenn on the shoulder and left.

Glenn then wandered off in the school, reflecting the two-year life here, until he found himself already at the entrance of the tunnel which led out of the school. The stone tablet was still standing there and the words “With my knowledge, give me a fulcrum on which to place it, and I shall move the world!” caught Glenn’s eyes again.

“It used to be so inspiring. But now, it is just so discouraging! Who on earth would give me such abundant knowledge?”

Soaked in sorrow, Glenn stood motionlessly for quite a while. Then suddenly, like a man who had been jerked awake from his nightmare, Glenn regained his faith and thought to himself.

‘I was determined to be a sorcerer before, then why should I quit just because of a small setback? What a boring life it would have been if I had followed the paths trodden by others. I need to be unique and I will be, even if it would go against all odds!’

Chapter 23: Glenn's Aphrodisiacs

Having regained his faith in his way of sorcery learning, Glenn left the stone tablet and returned to his dormitory. He then immersed himself in his usual meditation to help himself calm down and keep his mind organized.

Meditation was the most fundamental and efficient method to improve one's mental strength and to stimulate the conversion of mental strength to magical force. The potency of meditation varied with the meditator's [satori](#), which roughly meant how engaged the thinker could be during the meditation process. Besides, the duration of meditation should be restricted to around an hourglass of time, the chronometrical method widely used on the Sorcerer Continent where one hourglass equaled two hours in the human world.

In the Zen Buddhist tradition, satori refers to the experience of kenshō, “seeing into one's true nature”.

“Hmm...” Glenn completed his meditation and took a deep breath. He then put his hands eagerly on the crystal ball, which he'd received as a bonus along with the seven free sorcery courses from the school. He was rejoiced when the ball read a mental strength of 13 points and a magical force of 125 points.

“That is a two-point rise in magical force. The meditation seemed to have paid off!” Glenn exclaimed.

According to *A Guide to Meditation* by Sorcerer Apollo, the typical degree of magical force for a sorcerer was basically tenfold of his/her mental strength. Now with 13 points of mental strength, he had brought out a nearly ten times magical force.

That was a big step forward because in the very early days on the ship, he had produced merely three points of magical force when he had 12 points of mental strength.

In a quite delightful mood, Glenn then went to sit down on the chair in front of his testing table. On it were a dissected frog, a monkey brain and an assortment of insects drenched in jar fluids, a few squeaking rats in an iron grate cage, vials of perfumes which Glenn had manufactured according to the *Odor Mapping - Volume II of Canine Olfactory Enhancement and Odor Mapping*, and a much-valued microscope that cost Glenn 30 magic stones.

He flicked through his heavy notes that he had made over the past two years about *Canine Olfactory Enhancement - Volume I of Canine Olfactory Enhancement and Odor Mapping*, and now he was capable of discerning over 4,000 kinds of odors, tenfold of the average discerning capability. But for him, it was far from enough.

Glenn then lit an incense, a product which he had made himself. It could produce a pleasant and soothing smell.

“Olfactory Enhancement is not a [Hematology Sorcery](#), then what branch does it belong to?” Glenn wondered.

Hematology Sorcery was a kind of sorcery of power-building through transferring certain tough animal’s blood into the practitioner’s body, which was then adapted and processed in the circulatory system in ways that still baffled the most brilliant minds.

It was neither Curse Sorcery, Medicament Sorcery, Occult Sorcery, Mechanical Sorcery, Alchemy Sorcery nor any kind of sorceries he had learned so far.

And unfortunately, there was no way to know who had written the *Canine Olfactory Enhancement* and there were no similar books to refer to in the library where books on Curse Sorcery, Mechanical Sorcery and Alchemy Sorcery abounded.

Pacing to and fro in the dorm, he wanted a moment of enlightenment. And here it came!

Glenn had decided to take a big step.

Previously Glenn had conducted his research mostly by feeding the lab rats self-made medicines, which were meant for sharpening their sense of smell. But the process had been slow, so Glenn decided to take a risk and give the rats an intravenous injection of the medicine, and Glenn colored the medicine with a reddish, synthesized pigment.

Two days later, to his great surprise, he found that every single cell in the rats' bodies had turned red when he observed them using the microscope. The observation meant that the medicine had spread all over the rats' veins. But the microscope couldn't show the specific changes of the individual cells.

Determined to follow through his research, Glenn rushed to the Black Tower for help.

"There must be a more sophisticated microscope there," Glenn thought in his mind.

The ground floor of the Black Tower was actually a huge trading market, where people were all busy trying to make a deal. Glenn cut through the first floor and went directly towards the seventh floor where the room of Equipments for Renting was on. But Glenn was taken aback at the rental rate for the microscopes: one magical stone per day! Still, for the sake of his experiment, Glenn made up his mind, and rented one. He then rushed back to his testing table.

But the new microscope couldn't provide Glenn with the resolution at which any changes of the rats could be observed at the cellular level, either. Therefore, one day later Glenn returned the microscope and requested for a more sophisticated one. The boy who rented Glenn the microscope the day before looked quite surprised.

Normally, only medicament sorcery and, in some cases, mechanical sorcery and alchemy sorcery would require a microscope. Now that Glenn was asking for a microscope with a very high resolution, it indeed caught the boy off guard.

“What? The one you took is not good enough for you? What are you using it for, anyway? We are not majors in medicament sorcery! Besides, there are no better ones.” The boy shrugged. “Wait a second! My mentor has one. It’s said that he bought it from the Holy Tower of Seven Rings. You want it?”

“Yeah. I want it badly!” Glenn’s eyes brightened.

“Then I will let you use it for some time. As a reward, you pay me 20 magic stones. ”

“What? 20 magic stones? Are you out of your mind?” Even though Glenn speculated that the boy’s mentor must be a great sorcerer, he still thought that the microscope was highly overcharged.

“Well, I was trying to help. You know it’s a big risk.” The boy assumed a look that said he couldn’t care less if Glenn would not buy it.

“But I don’t have that much money.”

“Come to me when you get it, then. By the way, I’m Varro.”

Glenn had no choice but to leave, for he had only one and a half magic stones. He had almost used up his stones buying materials for his olfactory experiment. He kept murmuring on his way back, “How can I possibly get those 20 magic stones?”

Borrowing from members of the Death Sail League was not an option, because Glenn was too dignified to beg for money.

But suddenly, he had a good idea and he didn’t need to borrow at all.

“I now have the knowledge on olfactory enhancement, why don’t I take advantage of it?” Glenn thought. “I should start with the perfumes. Yeah, the aphrodisiacs! I could make and sell it at the trading market, then.”

Glenn jumped into air at the idea.

After years of efforts on olfactory and odor study, Glenn, unlike the majority of the pupils in the school, had learned no tricks of offensive skills, but had virtually evolved into a professional on odors.

Aphrodisiacs were actually recorded in the Odor Mapping. It was odorless, or subtly speaking, couldn't be sensed by ordinary people. The most amazing part of it was that it had a strong effect of increasing libido.

The aphrodisiacs were essentially made up of ten types of odors - three types of odors to impact and impress, three to make the odors last for several hourglasses; three to compel the subjects to be indulged in the odors and the last one to dispel other odors around the subjects.

After two days, Glenn had produced a jar of aphrodisiacs and then divided it into 30 vials.

“Now I can sell them in the market and get some magical stones.” Glenn was thrilled.

Chapter 24: Go With The Gadfly

Having committed himself to manufacturing the perfumes for two consecutive days while keeping his library cleaning work, Glenn had been exhausted. But he was high-spirited. He dashed for the trading market in the Black Tower with his 30 vials of newly-made aphrodisiacs.

“Will you please sell these 30 vials of perfumes for me? You can sell them at one magic stone per vial,” Glenn asked politely a fat boy who was reading a sorcery book at the time.

“Perfumes? What kind of perfume? Come on, I’ve got all the nectars in the world and they smell great.” The boy raised his head quickly. His eyes could barely be seen because they were mostly covered by the dewlaps around his eye sockets.

“It’s a little creation of mine. It stimulates sexual desire when sprayed on. And there are vials for both females and males.”

“Aphrodisiac!” The boy suddenly sounded interested and was about to try one.

“Be careful! It backfires if you pick the wrong one.”

Following Glenn’s instruction, the boy sniffed at the one for males and indulged himself in the scent for a while. He then opened his eyes and exclaimed:

“Wow, this is fantastic!” The boy continued. “What do you call it? Have you got a name for it yet? It did remind me of the ecstatic first love. It’s fabulous!”

“Well, the name...” Glenn stuttered for he had never thought that the perfumes should be named.

“How about we call it the Love Vial?” The boy became feverish at the name.

“Love Vial, brilliant! Let’s name it that! ”

“But it’s worth more than one stone per vial, don’t you think? Let’s make it two,” said the boy.

“Two? I don’t think the pupils can afford that much!”

“Oh, my boy, there’s no way you’d think that I’m selling it to those pupils only, do you?”

“What? The sorcerers, too?!” Glenn inquired.

“Exactly! We all have our desires, the sorcerers included.”

“Okay, then. We price it at two stones per vial and I will knock ten percent off the sales to you.”

“Then we have a deal.”

Glenn woke up early the next day. He then gobbled up something and got ready to go to the trading market. He needed the stones for another reason. He had a Soul Sorcery class that afternoon and the lecturer was a well-reputed sorcerer, who would introduce the basics of Soul Sorcery, which would help you lay the groundwork for raising Symbiotic Insects. But one magic stone would be needed for admission.

But now Glenn did not have a penny. The one and a half stones had been consumed on buying the necessary ingredients for manufacturing the aphrodisiacs.

“Oh, my dear! Here you are! The inventor of the Love Vial!” The fat boy was very swift in welcoming Glenn.

“It sold well?” Glenn asked keenly while wondering how a person as fat as him could manage such agility.

“You have no idea how well it went! I introduced one vial to a sorcerer. He loved it and bought all the vials. He even paid me an [intermediate magic stone](#) and left without asking for the change! Do you have more of these? I am planning to expand the market a little bit and sell it to other schools!” The boy rambled on as he handed Glenn a bag of magical stones.

One intermediate magical stone equals and can be converted to 100 magical stones on the Sorcery Continent.

“Well, I don’t know. I mean, I can’t make it now because I’m busy preparing for the imminent First-years Sorcery Test. But still, I will make some when I am low on magic stones.” Glenn declined the offer as he counted the stones in the bag.

“Okay, then. But please give me the information of your crystal ball. We’ll be in touch! I’m Dickens, by the way.”

Glenn left the trading market quietly. He was now worried that someone might become jealous of his wealth and cast a curse on him.

Glenn then scrambled towards the seventh floor to get the high-resolution microscope.

“Oh, Here you are! You’ve got the stones, I guess?” Varro remembered Glenn because he didn’t have many customers.

“Yeah, 20 stones, not a nickel less.”

“Nice. But my mentor is using that microscope you asked. You give me your crystal ball information and I will contact you immediately when it is available.”

Although Glenn was doubtful, he decided to take a risk and handed over the 20 stones to Varro.

Glenn then galloped to Soul Sorcery classroom and managed to get there in time.

“Does anyone of you have any idea how people from Foreign Land call us sorcerers? The Lord of Slaves! This demonstrates their grave fear of soul-slave control.”

The class lasted for two hourglasses and most of the time the teacher was eulogizing the greatness of sorcerers. But he was indeed a great sorcerer, and it seemed that he was addicted to his sorceries. Glenn was immersed in listening to him whenever he

was talking about Symbiotic Insects.

After the class was dismissed, Glenn went back to his testing table. He knew the olfactory enhancement experiment on the rats couldn't carry on without the high-resolution microscope, so he decided to prioritize the cultivation of the Symbiotic Insect.

Theoretically, any insects in nature could be used as a Symbiotic Insect which was able to protect its host from being mentally controlled because of some of the features of the insect's soul. But every raiser of the insect wanted their insect to have unique properties. Glenn had collected seven sorts of insects and had ruled out four. Now he had three options.

The first one was the Corpse-Eating Insect, which, as its name implied, fed on dead bodies. Glenn had collected some from a cursed dead body.

The second one was called Gadfly, a rarely known parasite. They would experience a strange circle of life. They were born in dung produced by cranes. When crane-dung-eating mollusks ate the dung, the Gadflies would enter the mollusk's body and lived in its intestines. One thing one needed to pay heed to was the fact that the Gadflies caused the mollusk's genes to mutate which, as a result, grew extra legs or feet and caused difficulty in the movements. They were then more likely to be eaten by the crane. Finally, the Gadflies came back to the cranes.

The third one was Diaphania, a much-preferred Symbiotic Insect by the sorcerers. Although they had little ability to attack but they could prolong the nurturer's longevity, in some cases, by even 100 years.

After weighing the cons and pros of the above-said three Symbiotic Insects, Glenn concluded that Corpse-Eating Insects were too cruel for him so he ditched them.

Now Glenn was stuck between Gadfly and Diaphania. Glenn believed that Diaphania had been favored for a good reason. But he

was more interested in Gadfly because of the mutations involved, albeit not good ones.

“Mutation was basically an evolution, and when the Gadfly caused a mutation in its host’s genes, it was clearly not through the Hematology Sorcery. So did it have something to do with olfactory enhancement?” Glenn kept thinking.

Then Glenn decided to experiment the Gadfly on a live frog.

Chapter 25: The Element Matrix

While Glenn was waiting for the new microscope and the results of Gadfly experiments on the frog, he had had a new sorcery book in hand, titled Basics of the Elements, thanks to his new-found bonanza of magical stones.

No sorcerer on the Sorcerer Continent would skip studying the Element Matrix, no matter how preoccupied he/she might be. And the temptation was the surge of mental strength for the cultivator, when the Element Matrix was built in his/her soul, and the process was dubbed the Element Matrix Curing.

The Element Matrix was the set of the permutations of the 26 symbols and signs (the elements) recorded in sorcery books. All of these symbols and signs could move, except for a six-sided star that served as the center of the matrix. Simply put, the Element Matrix was a complex pattern of symbols and signs, and when they were built or engraved onto the soul, they would greatly boost one's mental strength.

There were much simpler and random combinations of the said symbols and signs (usually concerning two or three of them), and when combined, they would be connected and thus would produce power by consuming magical force. One example of this power was the Deathly Flame which Sorcerer Dior had used to take on the tentacles back on the ship. But this form of power generation would cost a disproportionate depletion of magical force. And apart from the 26 regular symbols and signs that existed already, further ones were being tapped in nature or being explored in the lab.

The Element Matrix could be any of the possible permutations and therefore, result in different power effects. The newly found or created symbols and signs could be added into the Matrix, but the very center of the Matrix – the six-sided star – would remain unchanged. It was said to be the creation of the sharpest minds and

the most fundamental lever by which sorcery knowledge could be put into good use.

Glenn took out a white paper and a quill and began to copy the symbols and signs in the Basics of the Elements. As he was scratching his quill on the paper, he was actually using his mental strength to write them in his soul, and his soul had to be very familiar with these symbols and signs before their permutations were able to be accepted and engraved in soul, which would then complete the ultimate curing of the Element Matrix. A rejection might occur during the process, but mostly, the Curing would be finished within a year for most sorcerers.

Three days later, when Glenn found himself being able to write all the symbols and signs in his soul using mental strength without referring to the Basics of the Elements, he began to think that he might have some talent in this, and it turned out that he achieved the Element Matrix Curing on the tenth day of practicing.

Glenn took a deep breath and floated his crystal ball up before his face. He looked closely at the readings: Mental strength: 18 points.

“Unbelievable! That was a five point rise,” Glenn cried joyously before he murmured some spells to the crystal ball which then reverted from its brightly lit state to its original grayness.

‘Maybe it’s time to try the Fireball, like the one Sorcerer Elaine produced.’ Glenn thought to himself.

Glenn conjured up his magical force and then powered up the Element Matrix in his soul. At the moment, a teenager-fist-sized fireball appeared on Glenn’s finger tips after a puffing sound. Glenn was excited and then he flossed the fireball into the air, which drew a fire streak in the air. The fireball hit the crystal ball and relapsed back to his hand.

“21 points of power! The Fireball had 21 points of offense power! With such power, I could readily beat a knight.” Glenn rejoiced.

The power of a particular attack was affected by the “fulcrum” but was fundamentally determined by an individual’s mental strength, and usually only a quarter of his/her aggregate mental strength could be exploited within a short span of time if the user was a student, in which case, extra time would be needed for a student to converge and use the entire mental strength.

Glenn had applied 4.5 points of his whole 18 points of mental strength. That was almost a quarter of his mental strength. And he had consumed nearly 40 points of magical force to produce the fireball.

Glenn was now relieved a little bit, because with the Element Matrix cured into his soul, his chances of surviving in the upcoming First-years Sorcery Test would be greatly improved.

Pulling off the sorcery had exhausted Glenn, and he fell asleep.

After some time, he was awakened with a start by a ringing tone. It was the crystal ball that had rung. In no time, he could hear the ball speaking:

“My mentor is away now. Come quickly and bring some Marlin fish.”

Glenn recognized the voice. It was Varro, the microscope keeper, who was asking him to visit.

Glenn was also required to take along all his stuff that would be needed for the microscopic examination, because he had to use the microscope in Varro’s mentor’s room.

So Glenn packed up the rats, which had been intravenously injected medicines, to see what was going on in their cells, and a six-legged frog. The frog’s left hind leg had been deliberately amputated to be used as a host for the Gadflies, and amazingly, three additional legs had grown at the cut. The reason for that was the fact that Gadflies modified the hosts’ DNA sequences and thus, crippled the host to make them an easier prey for the crane. As a

result, the Gadflies could spawn larvae in the crane.

The additional legs were not something related to evolution. By its very definition, it should involve progressive developments and gaining of new biological features, thus pushing the evolved organism to a higher level along a linear pathway through the food chain.

The disappointment aside, Glenn grabbed the pack, rushed to the Black Tower and purchased some Marlin fish at the trading market on the first floor.

“Today is your lucky day. My mentor is away on a school business.” Varro greeted Glenn with a big smile. “Now follow me and do remember: no wandering.”

Glenn and Varro were examined thoroughly by a large mechanical at the large gate at the seventh floor, which led to higher floors - the place that was off-limits to non-sorcerers.

The examination complete, they went upstairs.

“Don’t look around! Many of the school sorcerers live here. You would be thrown through the window if you rubbed them wrong,” Varro warned Glenn who was staring about and wondering why there was no one in this spacious place.

“Oh.” Glenn nodded.

After they were through 75 floors, Glenn couldn’t stop panting, with sweat all over his forehead, while Varro was as good as he could be. Staring at Glenn, Varro sneered:

“So weak? Why are you not practicing Hematology Sorcery, by the way?”

Glenn made no response.

At the 80th floor, they stopped before a room which was guarded by a lazy black cat.

“This is the customer you mentioned?” the cat asked.

“Yeah. And here is your share - five magical stones – as always, we go five-five, and here’s the Marlin fish you ordered,” Varro replied as he threw the stones and the fish to the cat.

“That guy siphoned off half the amount. I gave him 20 magical stones!” Glenn laughed in his mind.

The black cat then rose up sluggishly and stroked its face before it seized the bag of fish with his teeth and jumped onto the top of a large fish tank beside it.

The tank was nine-feet-wide and ten-feet-high, and in it, a score of grim-looking fish were swimming, displaying their sharp and long teeth from time to time.

Chapter 26: The Life Code

Entering the mentor's room, Glenn saw a high-class microscope sitting on the mentor's testing table. According to Varro, it was an ultra-microscope, and because that microscope mainly dealt with tiny particles with a diameter below the wavelength of visible light, it had been designed to function based on light scattering, rather than the usual method of illumination - light reflection.

Glenn had observed that every single cell in the rats' bodies had turned red using his old microscope, and now his job was to put the rats in liquid for an ultra-microscopic examination.

Half a day afterwards, Glenn discovered that most of the cells in the rats were not red throughout, but only in a small section of it.

"The olfactory-enhancing medicine has been tinted red with the synthesized pigment. And a part of the cells is red. Does that mean the medicine only worked on a small part of the rats' cell?" Glenn turned to Varro, but the latter couldn't think of anything to reply.

"But what is this small part? And why does it look so fuzzy?" Glenn thought aloud.

"It may be because of the scattered light thing! Likely that's why the images appeared fuzzy." Varro had learned that from his mentor and was finally able to take part in the process.

A nod was Glenn's response.

Although a little bit discontented since the small parts blurred, and thus a fancier microscope would be needed, Glenn now was ever more beguiled by the superb power that had ameliorated one's ability to smell. He was ever more pleased by the prospect of finding out the ultimate cause of it.

Glenn seized the opportunity to look at the five-legged frog, too. He was assured that there were no hematological alterations in the frog after a full and thorough observation with the ultra-

microscope. So he naturally thought the mutation of the frog might be related to the frog's own small part of cells, and since the small invisible section had such a strong power that it could change life forms, Glenn named it the Life Code.

"The Life Code must be something fundamental," Glenn talked as if no one was around.

He had seen a transformation once back in Bi Seer city when Sorcerer Apollo morphed a knight into a pig. But that sorcery was much simpler and more understandable. That sort of sorcery drew the soul out of someone's body and planted it in another one, thus transforming the receiver on a temporary basis. But obviously, Life Code had caused some permanent and irreversible modification.

There were those who were less well-informed and thus might have ascribed all the peculiar things such as transformation to the will of the omnipotent beings. But there were no almighties or religious belief in the eyes of sorcerers, and if there was one, the centuries-old sorcerers must have been intrigued. They would hunt it down, catch it, slice it and study it under the microscope, as they had done to some self-claimed almighty gods on Foreign Land, who turned out to be just more intelligent life forms. But the majority of sorcerers on the Sorcery Continent did hold unknown life forms on the uncharted lands in awe.

At the time, the door was opened and the black cat came in languidly.

"Your mentor is on his way back. Off you go now, if you want to have your life spared!" The cat drawled.

Glenn's face darkened hearing the news, and in his mind, he could see the terrible ways of deaths if he was caught by Varo's mentor fiddling with his precious microscope. The next moment, Glenn threw all his stuff into a large bag, slung it over his shoulder and hurried out of the room. At the door, the cat gazed at Glenn and said: "Bring the same amount of stones and you can use the

microscope again.”

Glenn had neither time nor was he in the mood to answer the cat back and swirled downstairs with Varro.

Glenn rushed directly to the first floor and only stopped once he felt he was safe. He then went over to a store selling experiment materials. He also bought a crane.

“The Symbolic Insects have to be raised before the First-Year Sorcery Test.” Glenn put a few Gadfly larvae into the crane’s body and hoped that they could end up as qualified symbolic insects.

On the 15th day after Glenn planted the larvae, he came over to the crane in captivity after he finished his daily meditation. He stepped closer to the crane and by using his mental strength, he began to feel the growth of the larvae in the crane’s stomach, which had actually meta-morphed to pupas.

“Everything is going well, and in a month, they will grow into adults. Hopefully they will be my first Symbolic Insects.”

Glenn’s crystal ball beeped and a familiar voice was heard:

“Sorry to bother. I am well aware that you are preparing for your sorcery test but I am really in an emergency. A sorcerer is in need of some of your Love Vials.” It was Dickens, the one who had sold Glenn’s Love Vials.

In a flash, a nice-looking face appeared in Glenn’s crystal ball and she said:

“So you are the one who has invented the Love Vial, haven’t you? You are good to create something like that!”

‘Oh my. Isn’t she Elaine? The sorcerer who gave me the first lecture, and the one who ate centipedes in class?’ Glenn managed an unperturbed complexion.

Glenn dithered because it was his understanding that getting related to a sorcerer may forebode evil unless it involved

discipleship.

“I am asking you to concoct 30 vials for me. I mean, for females. And as for the reward, you name a figure,” Elaine said in a soft yet demanding tone.

As Glenn was wavering, Elaine reassured him that she would give him something for the test when she receives the vials. She then ended the conversation.

“I’d better buy myself some Sorcery Tools to defend against the possible curses for now.”

Glenn wasn’t planning to buy Sorcery Tools to go against Elaine’s or any other sorcerer’s wishes, because if they had made up their mind to kill him, there would be no way to evade them, and there would be no way as well for the LET to ever find it out. Glenn was just counting on the tools to give him a sense of security, because he now felt that he was in an ever more threatening world as his social circle expanded.

Glenn then ran to Dickens at the trading market for consultation over which Sorcery Tools would be more effective against curses.

“HaHa! I happened to have some,” Dickens replied.

“Really? Show me some, then.” Glenn’s eyes overflowed with delight.

“This is a drop of Mermaid’s tear. It will work three hours after you sprayed it on your neck. It sells at 50 magical stones.”

Dickens noticed Glenn’s dark face and grabbed another tool.

“The Gold Ring for permanent use. Lowest offer: 600 stones.” Dickens continued.

“You may not be satisfied with the above two, but you certainly will fall at this – the Tweeting Twig. Every sorcerer has one hung on their neck. It won’t keep you safe from being cursed but will keep the damage from worsening for some time. That buys you the

most precious time to lift the curse.”

Glenn seemed motivated and asked: “How much does it cost?”

“800!”

“800?!” Glenn repeated it only with a louder voice.

“That may seem unaffordable for you. But will you consider a partnership?”

“What kind of partnership?”

“We start a new store which will be dedicated to selling the Love Vial. What you need to do is to give me its formula, and in return, you will get 60 percent of the sales. And I get 40. What do you say?”

“And as a gesture of good faith, I decided to offer you 50 intermediate magical stones as an advance payment,” Dickens said seriously, “and to rest your heart, we will sign a Seven Ring Contract of Partnership.”

“50 intermediate stones? A Seven Ring Contract of Partnership?” Glenn was overwhelmed by a deluge of information.

Chapter 27: A Variety Of Gadgets

It seemed to Glenn that a partnership in which the bulk of profits would flow to him, and with 50 intermediate magical stones pre-paid to him, and, which was secured by a Seven Ring Contract of Partnership, was a sort of lure that he was not able to resist under any circumstances. What further assured him was that there was no way a signer of a Seven Ring Contract could breach it, unless he/she was a Level four-or-above sorcerer. So, he accepted the offer.

Glenn rushed to his dormitory that day with several valuable magical tools and some other stuff peddled by Dickens. He tried them with wild eagerness.

The Gold Ring on Glenn's right ear glowed and accentuated the radiating vigor of his eyes. The Ring was well worth the 600 stones. It effectively kept its wearer safe from curses or any other neural system manipulations. Besides, the Ring would absorb the element energy which was present in the surrounding air to help maintain constant body temperature.

For the treasure Tweeting Twig, whenever Glenn was affected by an unpreventable curse, it would make shrieking chirps and having the curse pegged temporarily to save the victim some time.

Among the little rarities, there was also a red mushroom. It was usually for medical uses and when it was mixed up with some supplementary medicament and then cooked as soup, then the person who consumed it would undergo an improvement in mental strength of, in most cases, one or two points.

Glenn got a Lapidary Pearl, too. With it in your mouth, you could breathe underwater. Of course, the subaqueous duration was limited.

Glenn was obsessed with the above-mentioned things, but his favorite was the Notes on Re-permutation of the Element Matrix,

which proved to be quite useful.

Three days later, Glenn went over to the library where he and Sorcerer Elaine had arranged to meet. His eyes were rimmed with black circles due to a severe lack of sleep. Fortunately, he had churned out the thirty Love Vials, as asked by Elaine.

Walking through the main entrance of the library, Glenn saw Elaine. She was sitting before a wooden round table, relishing herself in a cup of coffee. There were also a couple of trays of treats which were so delicate that Glenn thought that they might be misjudged as decorations.

Glenn was not in the interest of keeping a sorcerer waiting, since she might lose her temper and did something terrible to him. He approached Elaine and bowed as he handed her the Love Vials.

“HaHa. Look at your black eyes. This must have caused you a lot of trouble to cook.” Elaine rested the coffee on the table, and then raised her white-as-snow face slowly at Glenn. “These little creations of yours were indeed amazing. The sweet memories of yore just rush back to me when I take one.”

‘Of yore? How long have you actually lived, for God’s sake?’ Glenn was shocked at the words and also turned bashful on hearing a gorgeous lady talking about “sweet memories”.

Catching sight of Glenn’s stiff expressions, Elaine burst into laughter and diverted from the memory topic and said, “You did your job and here’s your compensation.”

Elaine held out three fancy gadgets.

“This necklace gives you two points of mental strength. But it will not work once the mental strength has reached the threshold value. I call it the ‘Source of Happiness’.” Elaine held the necklace on her palm as she explained.

Glenn knew the threshold value that Elaine was talking about. It was the minimum level of mental strength required before

someone became a sorcerer. It had to be at 40 points, of which Glenn was still 22 points short.

“This is the Buzzing Bug. Small as it is now, it grows very quickly and its size can be as big as that of an adult lion. It will protect you from dangerous enemies for a day. But do remember that it has to be raised in a dead body.”

Elaine harangued on in excitement.

“This is a seed of a flower named Cylix. The biggest use of it is for a makeshift shelter for hiding. How does a flower do that? It either rises into high air or burrows deep underground for accommodation or hiding. And it’s easy to breed.”

After Glenn accepted the gifts, Elaine put the Love Vials right into a mirror!

“The Sealing Sorcery! How brilliant it is!” Glenn shouted.

“You little brat do know something, huh?” Elaine quipped with a slight surprise as she patted Glenn on the shoulder and then whisked off.

The Sealing Sorcery was a sorcery by which the handler could cram things into a one-dimensioned object, a mirror for instance, for the convenience of carrying. At the time, all the memories of Glenn seeing the weird things at the residence of the Bi Seer city’s governor while he was taking the sorcerer qualification test, such as the paper man, the scarlet tongue and the huge rift on the ground, flew back. He was thinking that he might be endowed with the Sealing Sorcery, because only the sorcerers who had mastered it were able to see things that only existed in illusion, the Love Vials in a mirror to name one.

Glenn had learned from some random reading that these illusionary things could be less or more intelligent life forms that lived between reality and fantasy. For usual sorcerers, students or people, these half-existing things had different time and space.

Their worlds would never cross.

Glenn was getting his confidence back and was expecting something. These little purchases from Dickens and the rewards from Elaine surely had played a role. What also helped were the ongoing experiments with the Symbiotic Insects and the Life Code. It was a fact that the majority of students, for their whole life, did not have the luxury of becoming a sorcerer. But it was Glenn's belief that he would achieve something; despite being towered by the two genius students Kyrie and Bionna, he had been tested at 12 points of mental strength, and that was something.

Half a month later, the Symbiotic Insects had matured into adults. So Glenn wasted no time in dissecting the crane's belly and dislodged its stomach.

Glenn caught a strong and pukey smell as he ripped the stomach with a scalpel. The stinky smell was enormously magnified because Glenn had enhanced his olfactory senses, and he was now tenfold more sensitive to odors.

Glenn then took out hundreds of Symbiotic Insects from the stomach and nestled them in a prepared glass ware with white liquid in it. The insects were then quickly separated from the undigested food particles with the help of the liquid and then put into another dry ware.

"Oh, my dears." Glenn pressed his face over to the insects and watched them closely.

The Gadflies must have been so nauseous to someone who had never bred a Symbiotic Insect, but Glenn had grown accustomed to them and regarded them as a part of his life.

Glenn grabbed a Gadfly with a forceps and held it on his crystal ball. He then mumbled some spells towards the Gadfly, which was making low and jittering sounds during the process. He could feel there was a subtle change in his soul and minutes later, as drops of sweats appeared on his forehead, he exhaled.

“It’s done. My first Symbiotic Insect.” Glenn swallowed it. “You will live in my belly from now on.”

These Gadflies would cause malformation as they had done to many of the mollusks and the experimental frog but not when their souls were broken. And breaking their souls was what Glenn was doing when he casting spells at the Gadfly fixated on the crystal ball. But breaking a soul demanded huge amount of energy, so Glenn could only complete five soul-breakings a day.

For the rest of the Gadflies, Glenn did not intend to eat them, because he would then be “hosted” and might, as a result, grow an additional arm or leg.

Chapter 28: A Mask

Glenn's mental strength had leapt from 18 to 20 points after he put on that 'Source of Happiness' necklace. When he gulped the mushroom soup, the value of his mental strength now came at 23 points. The crystal test had boosted Glenn's mood a lot, but his magical force was not raised up accordingly. Apparently, the daily meditation had to be kept up to bring magical force up to par with the level of his mental strength.

Glenn now had many warfronts to fight. Apart from the daily meditation, Soul-breaking of Gadflies and re-permutation of his Element Matrix required a great deal of energy and efforts. As a result, Glenn boycotted all the sessions and gatherings held by the Death Sail League and quit his job as a cleaner in the library, since he was no longer deficient of magical stones.

As two months of secluded life drew to an end, Glenn had nurtured out all the Gadflies and the hundreds of them were all set in his stomach.

Another month of isolated life followed, and Glenn had succeeded in re-arranging his Element Matrix.

The fourth month, Glenn lifted the magical force to somewhere between 224 and 230 points, a normal place based on the approximate 1:10 ratio of mental strength and magical force.

The past four months had been a hell of a lot work, but Glenn had made some essential progress.

There was still one thing that occupied Glenn's attention - the Life Code. He had been expecting the crystal ball call from Varro for a higher resolution microscope than the ultra-microscope. Apart from that, it was the day to draw his monthly share of profits from the Love Vial partnership store.

The figure of Glenn's proceeds from that store was too significant

to believe. The first month since the store was brought on stream, it sold 600 magical stones worth of goods and Glenn was paid, according to the dividend payment terms stipulated in the Seven Ring Contract of Partnership, two-thirds of the total revenues, or 400 stones. The following month, the figure rose to 1,000, and in the third month, a whopping 3,000 magical stones went into Glenn's pockets. Glenn was even smiling when asleep because of the stockpiling of magical stones, and he had a good reason to believe that he would overpass many of the sorcerers in wealth.

And Glenn's peace of heart had not been disturbed by the probability of being robbed or ransomed, because it had been in public knowledge that Varro and Glenn's store had been making a good fortune, yet no one was getting in the way. This fact alone justified Varro's claim that he was well-established in the school and had his connections.

But before going to the Black Tower to collect his fortunes, he had something much more significant to do. The acquirement of three sorceries - olfactory enhancement, the Curing of the Element Matrix, as well as the Symbiotic Insects - had qualified him as a 'student' and not a 'novice' anymore. And what he needed now was a piece of certificate of 'studentship'. Getting certificated was nothing but a set of formalities to go through, but one noteworthy thing was that the sorcerer in charge of the certification was using the Love Vial. It seemed that Love Vial had gained some solid ground.

Afterwards, Glenn went to the Black Tower.

"Congratulations! I heard you've been granted the 'studentship'. You are now officially a student." Varro welcomed Glenn in his routine enthusiasm.

'How did you know?' was Glenn's original thought but he knew intelligence spread fast, so instead, he said:

"Yeah, it looks like I am more likely to take care of myself in the

First-years Sorcery Test.”

“Absolutely. Good for you! You are in a much better position to pass the test,” replied Varro vigorously.

“And here is your part.” Varro tossed a bag of stones to Glenn.

Glenn caught it in hand and glanced into it.

Varro observed timely the gloomy look on Glenn’s face.

Varro concluded that Glenn’s upset was undoubtedly not related to the stones, which had surged to 50 intermediate stones. Then it might have something to do with the First-years Sorcery Test.

“About the microscope you asked, I am planning to buy one from the Divine Tower of Seven Rings. It was off-limits to non-sorcerers but I have my way.” Varro offered.

“That would be great. I will get one at any cost,” Glenn replied.

Varro’s conjecture about Glenn’s gloom was proved right. Glenn’s satisfaction with the pouring stones had been diluted by the Test and what was preferred was some instant combat capacity.

“Go to the Alchemy Room on the third floor. They might be of some help.” Varro offered after Glenn confessed to him his anxieties.

The Alchemy Room door was kept ajar, and through the gap between the door frames, Glenn could see a skinny albeit robust man, who was short in stature. He wore a goatee and was perusing a book as he was humming something.

Seeing Glenn come in, the man moved his eyes from the book that had faded in color.

“How may I help you?” the man asked in a coarse voice.

“Emm, I don’t have any particular thing to purchase or learn in mind. I am here to see if you have some way getting me pass the First-years Sorcery Test. And Varro recommended you to me.”

“Hah, so you want the Sorcery Tools or the formula of making them?”

“I want them both,” Glenn answered without thinking.

“Okay...” The man drooled, displaying contempt for Glenn’s insatiability. “Here is the deal: Fundamentals for forging Sorcery Tools - session: 10 days, fees: 200 magical stones per day.”

“That sounds fair,” Glenn, with deep pockets, responded with a shade of ostentation.

Quite surprised at Glenn’s straightforward agreement and his wealth, the man restrained himself from his usual complacency and began to peddle a Sorcery Tool.

“This is Ashen Mask - a top-grade Sorcery Tool with strong powers. It got its name because of its as-pallid-as-burnt-out-ash color. It’s a replica of a great, great Sorcery Tool. The best thing about it is the defense shield it produces when an attack is launched against you. When the shield is formed, offenses below 20 points will just be bounced off and away. For offenses standing between 20 and 60 points, the shield will hold when you only consume one tenth of the amount of magical force which was originally required to fend off the offense. In other words, the shield constitutes nine tenths of the sum of magical force needed against an 20-60 points of offense.”

“What if the offense power is stronger than 60 points?” Glenn asked attentively.

“The shield will still play a significant part in the defense. It will save you two thirds of magical force. But in the case of a stronger-than-100-point attack, it won’t save you any magical force any more. And when the points of an attack reach 150 or above, the shield will get crushed.” The man continued.

“There is a second use of this treasure. Did you notice the horn on its top-right?”

Glenn took the Magical Tool. It was actually a mask with eyes and a nose hollowed out. And there was a horn on the right corner.

“Yeah, I saw it,” Glenn answered back.

“Try the mask on and see what happens.”

When Glenn set it on, he could almost catch clearly every light sound surrounding him that would have evaded him previously - the turn of the coarse adjustment on a microscope, the rustling of the book pages in the next room, and the hum of the trading market on the first floor.

The horn was an auditory enhancement.

Chapter 29: A Gathering Held By Black Sail League

Glenn was scribbling on a paper, doing his math and marvelling at how miraculous the Ashen Mask was.

“This is definitely a brilliant tool! With 23 points of mental strength I have now, when engaged in a fight, I could conjure up at best six points of [mental strength](#) instantly. And after the completion of the re-permutation of my Element Matrix, that will be an attack of 45-55 points of offense power. So, that falls to the range between 20 and 60 points of offense power, and when the Ashen Mask was involved, the assaulted person will only consume one tenth of the initial magical force to fend. That means I could easily smash any adversaries who had similar levels of offense power with me, without depleting the magical force of mine.” Glenn was so excited.

The power of a particular attack was determined by an individual's mental strength, and usually only a quarter of his or her aggregate mental strength could be exploited within a short span of time if the user was a student.

Over the days, Glenn had gotten his style. He dressed in a silky and loose robe, with the Ashen Mask covering his face and a Permanent Ring tumbling from his right ear.

Attire and accessories were only a part contributing to his style, though. Over the course of the ten-day tutorial sessions, he cut himself off from the outside world except for being with his Alchemy teacher and immersed himself in the learning of the skills. He had been a total hermit these days. He streamed in and out of the Alchemy Room, sponged the basics of Sorcery-Tool-making and had finished off the trainings with a fat notebook he had taken over the classes.

Under the Mask was now a pair of sagacious and lustrous eyes

which revealed a bit of mystery. Those who were acquainted with him would have had difficulty in recognizing him at the first few glances.

Glenn had engaged himself in experiments in which he took the notes as a guide and tried to make some lower-grade Sorcery Tools, which ended up as failures.

“Look at the hash of them.” Glenn, in his fury, smacked his testing table in the dorm, which was littered with all sorts of materials for manufacturing Magical Tools.

But his reason recovered soon. The Alchemy teacher’s reprimand rang in Glenn’s ears.

“The making process needs to be comprehensive and thorough, and every step of it has to be deliberately done, otherwise even the easiest tools will not be created.”

“Alchemy is not a tricky trade to pull off. One doesn’t have to be a genius to be a connoisseur of it. What is mandatory for success is trial and errors.” Glenn consoled himself.

Besides the Alchemy, Glenn also dabbled in Pharmacodynamics from another sorcerer in the Black Tower. As a result, Glenn’s sorcery knowledge had been growing so rampantly that it overpassed plenty of his classmates who weren’t granted the privilege of one-on-one tutorial guidance from sorcerers because of their general lack of magical stones.

The First-year Sorcery Test was around the corner, and the novices and students alike were under enormous pressure to forge ahead. Tension and anxiety seemed to permeate in the air of the whole school.

At the time, the Death Sail League called a gathering of its members, unexpectedly. The League had been in a fast expansion in both magnitude and influence but was still overridden by the Five Leagues.

The congregation had been called for the purpose of building a sense of mutual assistance among its members when they would be taking the Sorcery Test and thus magnifying the pass rate. That, in the minds of the Death Sail League's Twelve Superiors, would win their league fame for being a powerhouse of would-be sorcerers and thus projecting the League into one of the Five Leagues by edging one out and off.

Glenn's former group members - Lafite, Chris and Nina Hank and Robinson - were all present.

There was no shortage of pursuers for Lafite over the years and all those who had received rejections had never been able to brace themselves to make a complaint against Lafite. There were those who had borne grudges against her, which resulted from Lafite's pride and social bluntness and who had threatened or even launched willful attacks against her. They had invariably undergone the same destiny of suspiciously going missing. Lafite's dreadful greatness in dealing with the vicious attacks had helped her rank among the "Ten Grand Masters".

The "Ten Grand Masters" were a widely-accepted ranking regarding the command of sorceries. But Lafite, and the six Twelve Superiors of the Death Sail League who were on the list as well, sniffed at the ranking for the simple reason that the two geniuses, Kyrie and Bionna, were not included in it.

"Will he come?" Lafite mumbled as she dipped a goblet of wine in her hand. She then stared at the wine in a trance, reflecting on the tantalizing romance she and Glenn had on the ship.

"I haven't heard from him for almost a year. Do you have any idea how he is doing, Chris?" Lafite's thought was suddenly disrupted by Nina's enquiry to his brother, who was sitting next to her.

Nina's half face was covered with a mask to hide her injured eye and the scar. Although her brother had entreated several sorcerers

to treat her eye but they all declined to do so since Chris had nothing to offer to them as remuneration. Nina had lost the best chance to have her eye cured. It was safe to say that her wounded eye was going to accompany her for eternity.

“Me neither. But I have a feeling he is faring well. Don’t worry about him.” Chris stroke Nina’s hair to reassure her.

Armida, another follower of Lafite’s, who had clearly caught the word “he”, asked Lafite tentatively: “Who is this ‘he’?”

Armida’s passion for Lafite had never dissipated altogether, despite the fact that Lafite had never returned her love nor had the tartness in her words and her barely-controlled temper towards him ever overpowered him.

“There isn’t and has never been a ‘him’. Besides, why would it bother you if there was one?” Lafite seemed so impervious to Armida’s care or to his jealousy for the “he”, and Armida knew that “he” was Glenn.

“Don’t worry. Glenn is gonna be here by the minute. I’ve got the gathering’s roster and he is on it.”

Lafite overheard the words and drained her glass at one go.

At the moment, Lafite sensed that someone entered the main entrance of the gathering hall and she squinted. The fervor of almost everyone present in the house was ignited by the new arrival, and a student was so surprised that he let go of the glass in his hand subconsciously, which then shattered into pieces, producing a crisp and shrill noise.

“Sam?! Why is he here?” A student bursted.

Sam had never shown himself since he set foot on the Sorcerer Continent. For one thing, he was the one who sold Sorcerer Dior by calling up the sea monsters that caused heavy casualties among the students and who landed the students in the Black Isotta School of Sorcerers, rather than in the Lilith School of Sorcerers,

and that was why was he detested. For another, he now studied under Sorcerer Nilma and had a complicated relation with Nilma that no one could unravel, and for that reason, he was held in awe and veneration. So, everyone was curious why he would be in a gathering of the Black Sail League.

Chapter 30: Thunder Stolen

The Sword Caster Alastair, who was among the Twelve Superiors of the Death Sail League, was the first who was accepted as a “student”. These attainments were sound proofs of his ambition to do something big.

He rose from a sofa and stood straight as Sam strode into the gathering hall. Alastair stared at him, his mind on full alert for any possible abnormal behaviors from him.

"Look at the multitude of the people on our side. He won't dare create any trouble here, or I will give order and take him down." Alastair put on a calm air to the best of his ability, while he was trembling inside, facing this formidable and hideous man.

Alastair took a few steps towards Sam and stopped before him with a ceremonial smile.

Sam returned the same official smile.

"Alastair! I remember you. You were on the ship." Sam broke the embarrassing silence.

"It's Sam. I remembered you, too, like everybody here did." Somehow, Alastair was miffed on hearing these words which had been said in a tone that was neither disdainful nor aggressive. "And why are you here exactly?"

His livid look was caught by Sam's sharp eyes.

"You were great. I mean on the ship where you stepped up and took on the knights bravely, and now you are growing the League into a big and influential one." Sam exalted him as if he was attempting to diffuse the tension filled in the air.

"Hah, it was very kind of you to say these nice words. I am much honored." Being credited as the one who allowed the Black Sail League to survive and thrive on the Sorcerer Continent, Alastair was, for an instant, completely forgetful of who he was

confronting.

"I have been wondering if there is a spot available in your league. It's my intention to join the great Black Sail League." Sam held out his hand ready for a handshake with Alastair.

The congregate was stirred and began to hum.

"If there has been one thing that is regrettable and one thing left unachieved, that is to join you." Sam continued as he was running his eyes around the large circle of the members.

Alastair stood there motionlessly and became lost for words. He did not want to rush to make such an important decision.

"Who's there?" Lafite looked over the ring of crowd and shouted.

A masked man loomed large.

"He must be very good to have eluded the capture of my ears." Sam pinpointed the man while he retracted his hand.

The masked man penetrated the crowd and walked to Lafite, and when he was about to say something to her, he was interrupted by a pat on the shoulder:

"Glenn! So glad you are here. Where have you been these days? Why are you wearing that weird thing? Come on, this is not a masquerade." A volley of questions flooded the masked man or Glenn.

It was Robinson who had recognized him, by Glenn's manner of walking. Glenn had been engaged in pharmacodynamics and learned something from it to temporarily conceal or alter his body odor. That was why Lafite failed to recognize him by his odor the instant she saw him.

Glenn had been leading an isolated life for quite a long time and was not accustomed to public attention. He replied to Robinson awkwardly:

"Yeah, it's me..."

Lafite held her breath and stared at the man in front of her, the man whom she had been thinking about day and night, the man for whom she had turned down all of her pursuers, good and bad ones alike.

Armida, who was standing next to Lafite at the time, was in excruciating agony on seeing her arduous affection towards Glenn, yet he composed himself and said something to Glenn before Lafite did.

"Welcome back to the team. We have been waiting for you." Armada said in a sarcastic voice. His remarks caused some uneasiness among Glenn's little group. He was speaking as if it was him who had established the group in the first place and unionized it later on, and as if he represented the others when he welcomed Glenn back in the team.

Glenn's face fell although no one could see through the mask to catch that.

"Enough! Armida. That's enough!" Lafite yelled. "We five people were like a family. We stuck together when we were facing the danger of death back on the ship. Please leave and give us some privacy."

"Lafite, I was just trying to..."

"I said go away!" Lafite said it so loudly that her voice must have reached its highest decibel, and that brought her to a heavy breath. She had lost her patience at this clingy and hell-bent Armida on seeing Glenn's presence.

Armida fumed and turned to Glenn.

"You and me, outside!!" Armida challenged Glenn to a duel.

In Glenn's eyes, Armida was a pathetic man. He would go to deuce for a woman. His mind was so obsessed with a woman that he had been neglectful of sorcery acquirement, the very point of painstakingly coming to the Sorcerer Continent. Pettiness had

broken him, and now he was just was like a clown entertaining the persons who paid for its performance.

“Armida!” Lafite scurried between Armida and Glenn and faced Armida off. “Is this what you really want? You intend to fight me?”

Armida laughed cynically as if his heart had been ripped apart and thrown down the drain. For all the years, he had been looking after Lafite, he couldn’t believe that he had been a piece of junk that she would readily ditch. He was nothing but a worthless vermin. Armida then strode out of the hall, defying all the scornful looks at him.

With a whirring sound, Glenn was shoved by Lafite to the nearest wall.

Having boozed three glasses of wines, Lafite was now half intoxicated. She pushed Glenn all the way to a wall and pressed herself upon Glenn.

“Where the hell have you been for the past half year? You didn’t even answer my crystal ball call!” Lafite nestled herself more intimately into Glenn’s chest. “Are you seeing someone?”

“No! It’s just that I have been busy preparing myself for the Test.”

“I know you dare not...” Lafite mumbled, with her eyes barely open.

The next moment Lafite puffed heavily into Glenn’s neck, producing a strong smell of alcohol. Her hands were foraging downwards for his hands.

“Have you gone mad?”

“Yeah, I am. I am mad about you. I think I am in love with you, Glenn.” Lafite had reached his hands. She then clutched them for a moment and dragged them upon her breasts afterwards.

Glenn did not say or do anything.

“It’s really good to see you again. I was afraid that I might never have the chance of saying the word ‘love’.” Lafite took off Glenn’s mask and looked into his eyes.

Lafite’s tender sentiment almost melted Glenn’s heart and he pictured for a moment what a pleasant journey it would be to spend the rest of his life with such a pretty girl. But the next second, he came to himself and reminded himself of his original purpose of being here. So, he declined.

“My mind exists only for knowledge. I am afraid that there is no place for you. We would not go anywhere if we get together.” Glenn set his heart.

“But your body is saying something different.”

There had been no girls who professed affection to Glenn ever. At the time, Glenn had controlled himself physiologically but had considerably lost himself physically. His pulses raced, knees went weak and head reeled.

“To the hell with sorcery, let’s roll.”

It seemed that everybody had concentrated on admiring a love scene so much that they had completely forgotten that a magnate man was joining their league. It was a thunder stolen by love.

Chapter 31: A Rare Symbol Found

Lips brushed against cheeks, against lips, against neck, gently and carefully; not a word was spoken as the growling and the purring noises rose. Veins throbbed as breaths were stolen and given back.

Glenn reached his arms across Lafite and pulled her up against him. Shivers ran through their nerves and made them both tremble.

Glenn woke up the next morning and was enjoying the afterglow of the make-out with Lafite. It was as fabulous as the time he was accepted as a potential sorcerer back in Bi Seer City. It was so wondrous that he doubted it was real, until something moved beside his pillow.

‘Lafite! It was Lafite on my bed,’ Glenn almost cried out.

The next moment, all the pleasant feelings rushed back to Glenn. He then slung his hand over the arm of Lafite, who was lying with her bare back facing him, and stopped at her bosom. He touched and stroked her lightly so as to not wake her up.

“Erh...” Lafite murmured something in a low voice as if the whisper came from her throat. She then turned her face to Glenn and stared at him affectionately with her pair of startling eyes, which were glowing under her slender eyebrows.

Glenn gulped on seeing that tender love.

At the same time, he was tortured by the fact that now he had to take care of someone while he could barely do that for himself. Lafite seemed like a liability to him, an albatross around his neck!

‘How could I possibly survive in this cruel world with an extra burden on me,’ Glenn rebuked himself in his heart. ‘But I just followed my instinct. One can’t blame his instinct, I guess,’ Glenn consoled.

Lafite put her hands around Glenn and dictated, “My dear, from now on, you belong to me, and to me, alone.”

“But there is a long road ahead of us. I mean, we are only students. We have to be sorcerers to keep our love going.” Lafite’s plump breasts nearly pressed Glenn out of breath. “And I need you to pass the Sorcery Test and come back to me, safe and sound.”

Lafite had rattled out everything Glenn wanted to say.

‘Maybe that’s it. We will keep loving each other, and I will look after her.’ Glenn came to terms with this fact.

Lafite pecked Glenn in his forehead and left.

‘I wish Old Ham could have had a chance to see this.’ Glenn had accepted Lafite as the love of his life as he watched her walked out of his sight.

Glenn then went to his experiment table.

There has been no progress in the study of Life Code, since no better microscope was available to Glenn yet. So, he had been working on the Element Matrix lately.

Despite the fact that he had cured and re-permuted the Matrix and thus had his mental strength lifted accordingly, there was much more that could be tapped from it — the one(s) that hadn’t been found out besides the 26 existent symbols and signs.

But to dip further, a living person would be needed as experiment material. But the experiments on living people would come at dear costs. He/she would be wanted by all sorcery schools on the Sorcerer Continent, and there would be dedicated hunters to track them down and get them, just as had happened to the two sorcerers who had tested potions on Sam. And sorcerers who went bad were tagged the Black Sorcerers, a stain that would never be erased.

Sorcerers would neither kill nor run tests on humans. That was the bottom line.

But there was an alternative to testing humans — to buy a human-like slave from the Foreign Land. And Glenn could get one from some sorcerers if he paid heavily.

Human-like slaves from the Foreign Land were practically not humans. They just had similar level of intelligence as humans, that was all. That meant that they were not protected by sorcerers.

Glenn had been reaching out to get a Foreign Land slave but did not get anywhere. But there was something extremely valuable that Glenn thought might make up for it a little bit.

It was a length of a twig from a tree, which was said to have been stricken by a thunder. That was the reason that a store on the trading market at the Black Tower could sell a blackened, seemingly worthless twig. It contained some raw force from the thunder when elements collided mutually.

That store owner was selling it as a material for Alchemy. Soon, Glenn found that the twig was not helping for making a magical tool after heaps of failed experiments. Instead, he found out something else about the twig.

In the process of the chemical experiments with the twig, Glenn discovered that the twig had a highly-condensed and stable power in it, and once, a symbol appeared at one end of it. It was a complex pattern and could barely be discerned.

Glenn exclaimed at this observation. The symbol contained high energy and shared similar shapes with the 26 symbols and signs. He concluded that it must be a rare element, which had been transferred from the thunder and was conserved in the twig.

Sorcerers desired rare elements dearly. But it was extremely hard to find one, not to mention the pain and difficulty one had to go through to add it to his/her Element Matrix.

But the power it generated, as a result, was stunning. Sorcerer Dior had been assigned the mission of recruiting Kyrie and Bionna,

largely because of his strong power resulting from the fact that he had succeeded carving a newly-discovered rare element into his Element Matrix. He had the school's trust because of, essentially, a rare element. That was why Nilmar, a level two sorcerer, had to arrange Sam to use the pre-concocted powder to call up the Hurado Leviathan to consume Dior's strength before he showed up on the ship to battle him.

And it was said that a rare symbol could not be simply recorded in a sorcery book; it had to be carried on to another one by separating a part of the host's soul.

Chapter 32: Right Before The First-Years Sorcery Test

All the first-year pupils— novices and students alike— of the Black Isotta School of Sorcerers had gathered at the large square where they had assembled three years ago, when they were admitted to the school.

The only difference was that there were far less pupils this time. Many of them must have been murdered “accidentally”.

At the time, a sorcerer was motivating the crowd of students in excitement.

“Today, you are going to take the First-Years Sorcery Test, and there are a total of 1,577 pupils from the Black Isotta, along with all the other first-years from the schools in Section 12 of the Holy Tower. The maps being handed out to you will guide you. Your goal for the test is to spend a month of time on an enclosed land in the Bramble Forest and come out of it alive. Then you will be considered to have passed.”

“A month? Is it that easy?”

“What has changed? The test was said to be a terror!”

Pupils on the square buzzed.

On the rightmost of the throng, Glenn, Lafite, Chris, Nina, Robinson and a girl named Robin, who was in a relationship with Robinson, were standing close to each other. Robinson was the first to express his confusion:

“It’s said that we are the best ones in commanding sorceries and the biggest in number among many batches of pupils coming to the Isotta school in recent decades. For these reasons, a rumor has been circulating that the school has decided to ratchet up the test’s difficulty. Then I’d wonder why only ‘come out of the enclosed place’ would make us pass.”

“Maybe the place is inhabited by monsters that only real sorcerers could take down.” Robin pouted.

“Stop that! There is no way it’s going to be like that.” Robinson cut in.

“I doubt it, too. If that was the case, I bet no more than one tenth of us would be able to get out of that place, and even those three...” Glenn pointed to Kyrie, Bionna and Sam. “Even those three may fail.”

Chris calmed the rest of the group: “Don’t fuss. Just wait for the map, and things will clear out.”

On accepting the map from the map-handler’s hand, Glenn noticed a chain-shaped drawing inked in the top-right of the map. Then the chain got off the map and onto Glenn’s forehead before being carved into it. And the chain retained its former shape.

Glenn frowned, but he was not in the mood of lingering on it as all the other pupils with the map in hand were clamoring. He stared into the map, too.

The testing ground was a 300 square kilometers area marked off in the Bramble Forest. It was forbidden to breach the frontier, or they would be warned by sorcerers who would be guarding them.

Attached on the map was a booklet explaining the details of the contest. According to its rules, there would be mirror (where the Sealing Sorcery was applied) deliveries on three specific days during their 30 day stay.

The first delivery of mirrors was on the first day of the survival match and a total of 100 mirrors would be planted in different places within the area. Within a mirror was buried one student-level Magical Tool. The second batch consisted of ten Magical Tools that were a lot more powerful than the previous arrival and would be set on the tenth day. The last one would arrive on the 20th day. Only one mirror arrived that day, and the bonus were

medicines and sorcery notes that were thought to be able to spike up the receiver's mental strength.

Besides the clarification on the mirrors, a few words were written on the attachment: "For every contestant who is killed, the chain mark on his/her forehead would then be transferred to the killer's. For every additional chain one gets, 500 magical stones (an amount that would certainly sweep the contestants off their feet) would be conferred to him/her as a reward."

Glenn had thought that pupils in the Black Isotta were not supposed to kill each other, but it seemed that people had to kill to live now.

If the pupils were in luck, they might find a place to hide until a month later, but everybody was aware that go to the hiding, or relying solely on luck, was not an optimal option. They needed to be in extensive search of the mirrors and to power themselves up to be a hunter, rather than becoming a prey.

Glenn had an enhanced level of mental strength now and was armed with loads of Magical Tools, which put him in a good position to be in the match. And nobody except for the few pupils with innate talent such as Kyrie and Bionna had a chance to beat him.

"Consuming magical stones for the purpose of elevating my power was wisdom, I believe." Glenn recalled the huge amount of stones he had earned and had used in exchange for a variety of Tools, including his mask and symbolic insects, among other treasures.

But it would be a mistake to underestimate any enemy; in particular, the second batch of mirror supply on the 10th day might pose a real threat.

"We are being cornered. There is no way out," Robinson cried out after reviewing the map and the attached booklet.

His cry was met with a grim laugh. Chris then spoke:

“This is the time when we can have a real fight, like we did back on the ship. What is the point of working so hard at sorceries in the past three years if we are not going to fight? Unlike before, when we were weak setting foot here and when Lafite was protecting us from...”

As Chris was referencing Lafite, the rest of the group’s attention was focused on her. She was wearing leggings, with the medial part of them cut away and showing her snow-white thigh.

She moved her head away from the map and looked at Chris: “I was doing my part. Now we work together to get us through this trial of fate.” These words were uttered in a tone that could not be challenged.

“And I’d say we will be sent to the forest randomly. Nina, Robinson and...” Lafite stopped as she was listing the ones who should be looked after by the other team members. She then turned to Glenn:

“Nina, Robinson and Glenn. You three might not be that strong enough to jostle for the mirrors on the first day since it would be quite competitive. So protect yourselves. And the rest of us will try our best to knock down some mirrors to get the upper hand. After that, all members meet at here.” Lafite pinpointed a place on the map.

“Lafite, you don’t have to. I can take care of myself. I’ve got...”

“Don’t.” Lafite said softly, still regarding him as the one who knew nothing at all beyond that Olfactory Mapping or something. She held back her desire to say things like “for the sake of you” and instead she said: “The Twelve Superiors of the Death Sail League and Sam are having a brief meeting. I will be back in a minute.”

Before Glenn said anything, Lafite held her arms around his waist and kissed him fervently.

People surrounding them looked with their eyes dilated and mouth widely opened.

Lafite handed Glenn a ring as she asked him to take care and left.

The ring was a Magical Tool of hers, the one that she used to produce the vine. It was called the Heart of Vine. Glenn put it on, and it matched the Gold Ring on his other ear.

Glenn sighed. In Lafite's heart, he had always been the one that required constant care and protection. But being cared for really made him feel wonderful.

Half an hourglass of time later, contestants began to be led by over ten sorcerers onto a huge scale. Each of them stood on one side of the scale and the other end was loaded with many magical stones. As the magical stones decayed into gray stones, the pupil's figure obscured and then disappeared.

Chapter 33: Glenn Killed Two

With the consumption of some magical stones, Glenn was squeezed as thin as lasagna on the scale before he disappeared.

“Ah!” Glenn had passed through time and space to arrive at the Bramble Forest, the designated place of killing. Glenn almost vomited after the displacement. He had not dabbled with Hematology Sorcery, which could provide greater endurance and make one less prone to gross things.

Glenn was not a moron to let his guard down even though he was caught by dizziness. He observed that two students were confronting each other about ten meters away.

Glenn could discern that neither of them belonged to his school based on the marks on their foreheads. Actually, one of them was from the Ivory Castle School of Sorcerers, and the other came from the Compass School. Glenn had overheard their hostile conversation before his existence was detected by them.

“They are not my school fellas and even if they are, that are still my enemies. Things may be slightly different for members from the Death Sail League,” Glenn said to himself and stealthily regarded the two students before him as irreconcilable adversaries.

Glenn was wearing his Ashen Mask and that hindered them from recognizing the mark on Glenn’s forehead. Thus, they had no idea if Glenn was one of their own guys. Then again, proximity of relationships didn’t waiver a person from being an enemy. The simple truth applied for Glenn and them, too.

Catching that Glenn was breathing heavily and was at the verge of sickening, they transferred their ire on Glenn simultaneously, as if there was an agreement in effect, binding them to do so.

The two students took the first strikes. With a mutter of spells, a short yet pointed knife approached towards Glenn and in a split of

second, an icicle hurtled behind the knife, as if the former was chasing the latter.

Glenn was still trying to recover from his sickness and was sort of reeling when he was suddenly faced with the brutal and violent attacks. Since running or dodging were not an option, he produced the defense shield by virtue of his Ashen Mask.

As you might recall, the Mask offered extraordinary defensive power by creating a shield to assist in countering an attack, and offenses below 20 points would simply be bounced off.

“Clank, clank!” The knife hit the shield and bounced off to a stone on the ground, followed by a shower of broken pieces of the icicle.

‘Less than 20 points power of attack! That is weak!’ Glenn thought to himself. He was aware of their powerlessness since their weapons were both destroyed by his shield.

It was commonplace for students to not be able to produce over 20 points power of offense because most of them only had a mental strength limited within 10 to 17 degrees, with only a three-year meditation to stimulate the strength up.

The number of those whose mental strength had reached 24 degrees or more, like Glenn himself, could be counted on one’s fingers..

The two students gaped anxiously at Glenn as if he was a wild animal who was ready to get them. And they wondered what power was hiding beneath that mask.

One of them came to himself apparently more quickly than the other and ran away immediately by reaching a much greater pace with the help of an Acceleration Sorcery. This condemned the other student to be a much easier prey to Glenn. And Glenn would not let go of an easy prey.

Glenn produced a firebird, which flew at the student in an agile

manner.

The student caught on fire and burned wildly as he screamed miserably.

As was illustrated by Sorcerer Elaine on the Basics of Sorceries, the firebird was a fancier form of attack with much higher degrees of energy; it could be as high as 70 points. As a result, the poor student was burnt out in a few minutes.

Thanks to the killing, the mark on Glenn's forehead became clearer.

"Burp." Glenn finally had the chance to throw up.

"It could be easily mastered, but it would come with a cost. The cultivator was likely to be deformed in some way." Glenn hassled with the strong points and weak points of cultivating the Hematology Sorcery.

Glenn regained his vigor and pulled out his crystal ball from his coat to try to contact Lafite and the others.

The marked 200 square kilometers area was too expansive for the crystal ball to cover. Its coverage was, in effect, a range of merely 10 kilometers, allowing for the average level of the students' mental strength.

The contact failed. So it seemed that Glenn's team, or now Lafite's team, had been dispersed remotely.

Glenn checked the map and found no major landmarks that might lead his team members together. So he took a random road in the woods.

As Glenn drew along, he was caught off guard by a colony of nameless wasps which were antagonized for a reason that Glenn had no idea of and were buzzing in on him.

Glenn miscalculated the danger he was in. His enemies came from Mother Nature, too.

‘There must be hundreds of them! I will be gone in minutes,’ Glenn thought as he produced the bubble shield again.

The swarm of wasps patted on the shield heavily and intermittently like great rain drops crashing on the glass windows of the penthouses. Certainly, these little creatures didn't have sufficient offense power to crack the shield, nor did it require Glenn to consume his magical force to support it in the defense. They were coming at him stubbornly even when many of them had been sprung off.

So Glenn was entrapped, and the Ashen Mask - the producer of the shield - was not able to replenish the element energy, which was extracted from nature, to keep itself working.

But sorcerers fought tough wars using their wisdom instead of using violent means. Violence, if not properly leveraged, was tantamount to silliness.

Glenn pulled out a vial of potion, and it gave out a scent of no decent nature as Glenn opened it.

The odd scent dissipated through the shield and filled the air. The forceful wasps were dispelled and fled away as if there was a flood washing them.

The wasps gone, Glenn was covering his mouth to protect himself from the foul odor. Suddenly, a few meters away from him, something in the bush moved.

Glenn approached toward the bush for a few steps but stopped. Although the first day mirrors had not arrived and thus only a few students would have the upper hand without its help, there were gifted ones like Kyrie and Bionna, and his enemies might be from other sorcery schools of which he had little knowledge. And what if it was a wild hog or something whose impact was too strong for the shield to hold?

As Glenn was thinking how he would deal with the thing in the

bush, it moved again. Glenn took a couple of steps further toward it. The thing suddenly broke the entangled and unkempt branches and emerged.

"Ha, a man!" Glenn sneered.

The man appeared rather panicked. He must have seen how Glenn defeated the former two students and the wasps and thought Glenn was too powerful to have as an enemy.. Before saying anything, he had scuttled.

Glenn extended his right arm towards the man and a vine appeared. The vine crept quickly yet tenaciously along the ground and tripped the escaping man by tying his ankles.

It was the magical tool Lafite sent him that had produced the vine.

"Humph, such a lame sorcery is gonna get me?" The man puffed and his feet slowly turned into a pair of bovine hooves and easily got out of the vine ring.

As the man stood up and got ready to run again, Glenn started the Firebird and sent the fire to chase him.

It seemed that this man was stronger than the former two, and he had mastered some quite good sorceries. Right before the fire was going to catch him, he melted into a ball of blood and spurted away.

Glenn came to where the man had vanished, looking a little bit downcast, but he found some blood stains on the ground.

"Haha, you idiot. You left your personal information? Let's see if you've raised Symbiotic Insects or not." Glenn laughed insidiously.

Glenn set up an altar and put a straw man on the center of it. He then dipped his finger on the blood stain and chanted. As Glenn was murmuring, a cloud of red mist floated upwards.

The escaping man halted a few minutes later when he had made

sure that Glenn was not following and was sure that he had surely exceeded the attack range of the fire bird.

"Luck is so against me! The first day being in this damn place and I came across such a freak!" The man complained.

The next second, he broke out in cold sweat and suddenly he could not see anything.

"No, no... I am cursed!" The man became desperate and scurried around in blindness.

Glenn tracked him down half an hourglass later using his enhanced odor discerning capability and found him burnt out because of the curse.

"You poor silly soul. Why did you cultivate such a sorcery for running? And you haven't bred your Symbiotic insects. That is suicide."

Chapter 34: The Hunting Continued

There was someone worthy of mention now in the Bramble Forest — Baird from the Umbra School of Sorcerers.

Baird was humble and had a profound wisdom, while the biggest feature that distinguished him was his fiery ambition to be great.

He had held the belief that over time he would be able to beat all existing sorcerers on the Sorcerer Continent, and he had acted so. For three years, he devoted all of his time to sorcery learning, and he overtook everyone around him and was catapulted to fame as someone with the potential to be included in the top ten sorcerers in the school. He had been convinced that given more time, he would have overpowered them one by one.

This was his pride.

Now the First-Years Sorcery Test was his opportunity to prove himself, and he could barely hold back his desire to laugh at the horrible countenance assumed by the students when the Umbra School's announced the commencement of the test. The test was a feast where he could entertain himself by relishing in the food.

He bowed his head to try to conceal his evil craving to kill.

"Kill one student, take his chain on his forehead and I will get 500 magical stones. That is way too easy. God knows I earn merely dozens of stones a month," Baird said to himself. "That would be 5,000 stones to take ten students and 10,000 for 20 and..."

Baird's eyes dilated in excitement.

'This test is just a collection of magical stones, and I am sure none of the contestants from the Umbra or any other sorcery schools could really take me on. All I care about is the Holy Tower Trials,' thought Baird.

And in the Bramble Forest now, while he was waiting for the first arrival of the magical mirrors, he had killed four other match-

takers and obtained 2,000 stones.

“With such an amount of money, I could buy all the stuff I need when I get back to school. Those ten best students would be crushed like bugs by me, if they had the luck to get out of the test.”

Baird seemed to have become too obsessed when he last took a student’s life, as he penetrated his “paw” into the student’s body and pulled it out.

Half an hourglass passed.

During this time, Baird had not hunted one student, nor had he even encountered one because of the huge power he had absorbed from the chain marks of the dead ones, and the chain on his forehead was sending robust signals in waves as a result. Any students who had came in his vicinity had thought of him as an unbeatable enemy and had stayed clear of him.

Suddenly, he paused as he sniffed a signal coming out from behind a shrubbery. He bemoaned: “How long has it been since I last killed one? You poor little kitty.”

Baird made a few further steps towards the shrubbery. Both his hands shifted into a pair of paws with which he had ended the four students’ life, and his entire body was, almost simultaneously, covered in scales. On the surface of the scales was a sticky mucus. They were shining in the sunlight, which came through the gaps between the tree leaves. The shift made, he moved in on the prey with an agility like that of a leopard.

“Little kitten. I am coming. Don’t be afraid.”

Baird circumvented the shrubbery and was shocked at the sight before him.

A large expanse of low-growing grass and tree branches had been scorched. The ground was pitted. It was as if there had been an explosion.

A real explosion was not possible as there was no such things as

powders, but sorceries could produce powers that were far more effective in producing such a mess.

“There must have been a big fight. At least 20 students must have been engaged.” Baird estimated.

The weird thing was that no dead body was found, and as he searched farther, he observed that a man was panting and was supporting himself with his hands pressing on his thighs.

Baird gulped. A cold sweat dropped, but he didn't realize it.

The signals being sent out from the unknown man's chain mark were so forceful. The chain mark was the sun and the signals were the solar wind being pushed forward in every direction.

“How many student had he killed to send so penetrating signals?” Baird wondered. “There is no way I can cope with him.” Baird had forgotten his initial intention of being here and only wanted a way out of this nightmare.

The man straightened and turned around to face Baird.

Baird was almost blinded by the light reflected by a white mask into his eyes.

It was Glenn. He had not met a real enemy in this forest and six students had died under his Firebird. Each chain mark contained different levels of power, and fortunately, Glenn had killed one student whose chain mark represented a power that amounted to four ordinary chain marks. So he had essentially accumulated ten chain marks. He had been bothered by the inconvenience of the intense signals too as the weaker students recognized the signals and immediately ran away. Glenn was like a source of fire, and the heat kept almost all students away.

But it was indeed “almost”.

Baird coming to Glenn was an accident, since he had lost his reason in hunting his prey. He wouldn't have done it if he had come to himself and “evaluated” what kind of power Glenn's

signal represented.

And there was a group of four students who had overestimated their power and intentionally took on Glenn, in the hope of winning the jackpot. They risked their lives and lost them. By the time Baird came to the site, Glenn had destroyed them and absorbed their chain marks. The explosion was the fight between them and Glenn.

Again, luck was with Glenn for the weakest one among the group had a chain worth three average marks in terms of power, and the strongest had eight. So, Glenn had a chain mark that equaled to 33 basic marks. The signals spreading out from Glenn's chain mark were in rings and the radius of influence reached 100 meters.

Glenn turned about and saw Baird.

"A man had only five basic chain marks?" Glenn smirked. "Still, it's 2,000 magical stones."

Glenn watched Baird wickedly while consuming an intermediate magical stone to replenish his magical force.

Before Glenn could react, Baird took a run.

Glenn was quite confused since Baird had the courage to confront him, but he was now escaping without a fight fought. The confusion aside, Glenn produced a large-winged bat that was twice his size. He then rode it to go after Baird.

As the bat was fluttering its huge wings, Glenn rose and fell in the air, and his chain mark was giving off the strongest signals ever. Any recipient of these signals fled from it.

There was an approach to keep the waving of the signals within the smallest scope possible. That was when one's magical force was at its maximum and the owner was not using it.

Baird was now within the range of Glenn's Firebird. Glenn seized the moment and called the Firebird to pursue him.

Baird yelled. He did not turn his head as he had busied himself in running fearing that any meaningless moves might delay him and render him as a tool for Glenn to gain magical stones. But he felt that an energized wave coming at him.

In his desperation, Baird produced a Magical Tool which was said to be a priceless instrument. It was actually a shield, partly visible and it was flowing at its original place.

The Firebird hit the shield, and the explosive fire shuttled in every direction with a deafening sound.

To the surprise of both of the fighters, the shield withstood the fire, but due to the impact, it nearly turned visible.

Baird heaved a sigh of relief.

“How could it be possible?” Glenn frowned.

Glenn would have definitely crushed the shield if he had used more of his magical force for another round or two strikes, but he had consumed too much magical force in previous battles, and if he were to be attacked by a mighty enemy, he might be in a very unfavorable condition.

Before he could get the mirror, he'd better be more defensive, rather than being offensive.

“Today is your lucky day. I'll spare your life.” Glenn sighed.

Baird then made a quick escape.

Glenn settled the bat and focused on recovering his magical force through the consumption of magical stones.

Also, Glenn grabbed two Magical Tools with no mundane utility on the first day's wrestles.

Baird had run out of Glenn's range of attack and was finally relieved. He complained, “What a freak! I almost got killed on the first day of the test. Thank God I bought the Void Shield. Now maybe I should set aside the task of head counting and find my

school fellows.”

Chapter 35: In Front Of The House Where The Mirror Is Hidden

And Glenn found that if his magical force was at maximum value and when he made no physical movement, his chain mark would vanish temporarily and would no longer be felt by people around him. However, any movement of his body would activate his chain mark, and thus, the signals; when the value of his magical force was full, the scope where these signals could reach was much more limited.

It was the first day of the test and the first batch of mirrors were going to arrive. Knowing that his magical force had been nearly refilled, Glenn tapped a leaf of the flower that he was in, and it moved upwards slowly until the soil overhead loosened and the flower broke out of the ground. When Glenn dripped a drop of potion on it, it immediately constricted back to a seed.

Glenn headed toward a mountain. On his way, he did not bump into anybody because despite the fact that Glenn's magical force was full, whenever he moved, anyone within around 30 meters could feel the signals. The students invariably shunned him.

The mountain was about three kilometers away from Glenn, and the night screen was going to hang down in about an hourglass.

Even from such a long distance, Glenn could see that the mountain was coated in thick trees and bushes. Suddenly, there came a long howl.

“The mirrors have arrived.”

Glenn felt a thrill going through him, and he ran full throttle towards the nearest mirror, which was in that mountain. So did the rest of the test-takers.

Glenn did run into a few number of students but they uniformly stayed clear off him, and he was not in the mood of chasing them

at the cost consuming his magical force which might be put into better use in the scramble for the mirror.

Everyone in the Bramble Forest had now reached that consensus, and thus, the weaker were in a relatively safe position before arriving at the spot.

In a few moments, Glenn had reached the place where the mirror was hidden.

“A mirror in such a shabby house?” Glenn felt dismayed, fearing that the mirror’s power might be overpowered.

At the time, about 30 students had arrived before the house.

What interested Glenn’s attention was a big tree, around 30 meters high. The long arms of the tree were waving in the wind as if they were guarding the house by entangling the invading enemies and strangling them.

When Glenn had a closer look at it, he discovered that the tree was alive, and the long flapping arms were in effect arms. It had a large twitching mouth and looking through it, two lines of jagged teeth were shining in the nightfall. It was this tree that had made the roaring howl.

“This is the Colorado Nightmare Tree. What is special about it is that it has to be fed once in a hundred years with human blood,” a student in the 30 or so group said.

“And we are so doomed to be here at the time of him in need of food?” Another student echoed.

“That’s true. I’ve seen three students swallowed by the monster, and he seems still hungry.” A student exacerbated their frustration.

“Where can we get some food it needs?” A stupid question made all the students present vigilant.

The majority of the group had come single-handedly, but there

were two who came together, and both of them had a ten-point chain mark, meaning they had killed some students and absorbed the power of their chain marks.

The male one from the pair said something to the other — a female who was sitting on the back of a lion. The female didn't answer. She had not been prepared to annihilate the students and sent them to the avaricious mouth of that brute.

Glenn watched and kept his body motionless, waiting to see how the situation would unfold.

At that time, a student stepped forward towards the entrance of the house. He had employed invisibility sorcery, but he could still be seen from time to time since that sorcery of his had obviously not been practiced to perfection.

Therefore, the watchers were laughing coldly, waiting for the time when the rash boy would be engulfed.

To their astonishment, that off-grade invisibility sorcery fooled the tree, and the boy succeeded entering the house. When the boy was sent away, a sound of metal colliding with metal broke out from inside the house, as if he had been sent off through a transmission gear.

The students were all enraged. But the house did not disappear.

"So one mirror might serve more than once?" Glenn and the two ten-point mark students speculated.

The male student urged the female. "If you haven't made your mind, I have."

"I have." The girl threw a sneering look at the boy. She then flapped the lion's rump and charged at the students, and the boy followed.

The crowd's ability could, in no manner, match the pair. So, some of them flustered into the house, a considerable number of them were caught by the tree and the others scampered off, no

long caring for the sh*tty mirror.

In the distance, Glenn was still watching, assuming an extremely calm expression. Soon, a girl came to him in her desperation.

“Thank God, Glenn, help me. It’s Olivia, from the Black Isotta. Please.” The girl recognized that Glenn’s chain mark belonged to her school, so she had run to him for help.

Glenn stepped up and guided her to his back.

Olivia was almost stressed out a moment ago and now she was temporarily in a safe haven, but her face was still bleached.

“The boy is cruel, and he is powerful. You be careful, Glenn,” Olivia warned Glenn.

Glenn had already sensed the signals sent by the boy’s chain mark, and he was sure he would take the boy easily. But he just remained still to trap the boy coming closer to him.

As the boy drew nearer, Glenn revealed a scary look as if he was the hunter, ready to have the prey.

Glenn moved, although he had not wanted it.

As Glenn made a move, his 33-point chain mark erupted and sent in waves of huge power that “flooded” Olivia behind him and the attacking boy who was only a few steps away.

“What the hell?” The boy was almost petrified and in no time he “rerouted” to get clear of Glenn.

But it was too late. The boy and the girl were both consumed by Glenn’s Firebird.

“I will come back for you, you masked man!” A student who had escaped a hundred meters away screamed at Glenn.

Glenn ignored the threat. Instead, he was counting the newly collected chain marks. “Good, 18 points of new chain marks.”

In the slaughter, Glenn had, in fact, killed another two students

besides the pair.

Olivia was the only one left unhurt. She was standing there, terrified by Glenn's brutality and the prospect of being killed by him.

However, Glenn smiled to himself and was about to comfort her when the tree spoke:

"You have more than 30-points of chain marks. You are granted the access to the house."

"Interesting!" Glenn looked up towards the tree.

Chapter 36: Warning From A Purported Sorcerer

What had sent the boy away before Glenn entered the house was indeed a metal transmission gear. In front of the gear was a table, and nine identical canes were standing on it. Each of the canes was latched in a tube, and one had been taken because it had been emptied.

‘The boy before me must have taken it. But is the mirror reward merely a stick?’ Glenn thought.

Still wondering whether that ordinary-looking thing might be useful, Glenn touched it. The moment he put his hand on it, his body immediately twisted and he then disappeared, producing a swoosh sound.

Unlike last time when he was delivered to the Bramble Forest from the large scale at school, Glenn didn’t feel sick. As he estimated, it was a only transmission around several kilometers away.

The cane was transferred along with Glenn. He then held it in his hands and studied it.

“This is rubbish. A stick with 40 points of offense power? I can buy one at the market place of the Black Tower,” Glenn complained. But as he examined it further, he detected a rarity about it: it could benumb the one being attacked by it, and it worked really fast.

At the time, Glenn felt the existence of another mirror, and it was not far.

It occurred to Glenn that his little group might be there for the mirror, and hopefully, Lafite might be there too. So, he started to take a run toward the new mirror house, reckless of the strong signals released from his chain mark that would undoubtedly scare

off his “preys”.

In a few minutes, Glenn got to the house. Dozens of students had been present there. Almost all of them stepped backwards when they saw him, and they were all looking him in awe, pondering why a student could master such a high level chain mark. Among them, a student looked furious and he provoked, “Glenn! Why are you here? Where is Lafite?”

It was Armida, one of the Twelve Superiors and a pursuer of Lafite. He was wearing a bushy beard and glared at Glenn with hostility.

“Armida.” Glenn responded politely, seemingly not bothered by Armida’s rudeness.

As Glenn approached Armida, the heart of Vine ring hung down from his ear glowed. Ironically, the ring shined and Armida’s heart paled. He recognized the ring. It belonged to Lafite.

“Why is it you? Why did Lafite choose you?” Armida could no longer keep his anger in. Before Glenn tried to offer an explanation, Armida snarled. At the same time, long and thick black hair grew from his chest, back and limbs and finally his face. And his body swelled 1.5 times of his original size. He had turned.

“Hematology sorcery? Chimpanzee Transformation?” Glenn knew the power of that sorcery, and he collected his magical force within his body, ready to fight. But he was not interested in getting involved in a fight since Armida had two students as his company on this site, and the students present were likely to conspire to destroy a strong enemy like him.

“Awoo!” Armida grunted. He was on the verge of launching an attack.

“Armida, don’t.” One of the students accompanying him warned. “He is too strong.”

Those nice words seemed to have backfired. Armida leapt

towards Glenn.

However, Glenn was determined to quell this battle. As stated earlier, he didn't have the intention to antagonize such a large crowd. Besides, if he engaged and killed him, he wasn't sure how Lafite would react to it.

Therefore, after Glenn threw himself onto the ground to dodge Armida's pounce, he placated Armida.

"Armida. It's enough. Stop this foolishness," Glenn berated. "You wanna know why Lafite choose me instead of you? It's because I saved her life. She was in danger when we were on the ship to the Black Isotta, and I saved her. That's all. You are better than me. It's just you met her later than me."

Glenn could see that there were tears in Armida's dilated eyes. For all three years, Armida had been doing everything he could to woo her, while she even refused to give him an opportunity. The pain resulting from it was excruciating. It was understandable that he hated Glenn. As the saying goes, "the deeper the love is, the more badly one could get hurt."

Armida seemed to have lost his heart. His brutality was gone. The deck was stacked against him, at least in term of Lafite. Consequently, his body shrunk and the unnecessary hair disappeared. He then turned back to his two fellow students.

The interlude had ended. Glenn strode to the tree, which was the reason why none of the crowd had been able to or had the courage to enter the house where the mirror lied. It was also a Colorado Nightmare Tree, only smaller than the one which guarded the "mirror" Glenn had acquired last time.

"Hello, big tree. I'd like to ask for permission to enter the house." Glenn asked graciously.

The rest of the students were taken aback while most of them were hoping that the tree would entangle him and choke him to

death.

“Of course. You have a more than 30-points of chain mark and thus, the right to enter the house,” the tree replied.

“There is one thing, though. You have already acquired one mirror. The attainment of another one has the possibility of going against you,” the tree added.

Permission granted, Glenn approached the house. However, something strange happened. Glenn felt a weird wave of energy coming from within the house, and it was very different from those given by from the students. The energy was actually suppressing his own energy and made it unable to function properly. What was more creepy was that the waves of energy seemed to only target Glenn himself. Glenn had a hunch that if he had applied his magical force now, a considerable part of it would have been neutralized.

“Was this energy related to real sorcerers?” Glenn wondered.

As Glenn held out his hand and was hesitating if he should let go of this opportunity, he trembled. A gush of strong wave pushed out against him. Glenn realized that it might be a warning, and he would be punished, perhaps seriously, if he opened the door.

Glenn paused there for around ten seconds.

He finally made his mind and left.

“What is this weird energy. Was it coming from a sorcerer? Does the power from the students’ chain marks originate from it?” A volley of questions bothered Glenn.

Seeing such a formidable enemy leave, the students were relieved. A few students were curious to have a talk with the tree, but ended up as food for it. The reason was simple: they didn’t have the 30-points of chain mark.

Chapter 37: Being Despised

Having left the mirror house, Glenn sought a hidden place and recovered his magical force to the maximum. Then he checked his crystal ball to see if his teammates had contacted him, which showed that no information had been received.

Glenn headed randomly in the forest since he had been warned by a mysterious force not to touch a second mirror, and his teammates were nowhere to be found.

Glenn's strong signals emanating from his chain mark had kept all the other students along his way off, although he had tried his best to contain them.

After a few hourglasses of wandering in the forest, he bumped into a leopard. The leopard seemed very hungry as if it had not eaten any food for days. Being strong and agile, it still didn't have the courage to hunt the prey in front of it. As the Chinese saying have it, "A cooked duck flies away," meaning that the leopard had to let go of a ready meal even while it was starving.

Animals could sense Glenn's signals, too.

When Glenn arrived at a clearing, he sat on the ground for a rest.

As Glenn was meditating to relax himself as well as to improve his mental strength, he could detect a strong wave of signals not far from him. Actually, whoever had sent out these signals had been stalking even before Glenn met the leopard. Glenn had turned around from time to time to check what was going on in a way as naturally as possible, but he had found nothing.

"Invisibility Sorcery?" Glenn could not help but murmur. "That's why I couldn't see him."

The student following Glenn was indeed invisible because of the Invisibility Sorcery, and had been taking extra caution by staying 50 meters away from Glenn. That was a distance from which Glenn

couldn't locate him/her. Overhearing Glenn's murmuring, the follower immediately ran away.

"Who was that? Which school does the guy come from?" Doubts invaded Glenn's mind.

An hourglass later, Glenn's crystal ball received a message. It was Nina. Glenn was excited, and he sped up towards Nina. He had been rambling in this woods for almost a day and had finally contacted one of his friends.

Soon, Glenn came before an expansive mushroom land. Mushrooms abounded in this forest, and there was nothing worthy of mention about it. Glenn took notice of these fungi, but he could not care less when he cut across the land. When he accidentally stamped on a mushroom, its cap (pileus) exploded and the spores on the underside of the cap were spurted out and then pervaded the air.

Glenn's head became completely dizzy, and everything around him faded and became twisted as though they were unreal.

"Sh*t! I have been attacked by a fantasy sorcery! It was triggered by scent." Glenn was panicked. "And the effect was amplified by my enhanced sense of smell."

The fantasy sorcery was not initiated by any students. The mushrooms did it. It was a trap devised by nature. Glenn's necklace was supposed to defend fantasy strikes like this, but this time, it failed to be effective possibly because this psychedelic worked out a magic through Glenn's advanced olfactory system.

As Glenn became dizzier, he recalled how his symbiotic insects - the Gadflies - could fight against curses and other fantasy sorceries. He then stimulated the Gadflies in his body, and the insects moved and hummed, producing unbearable noises in his ears. The penetrating buzz brought Glenn to sobriety in a few seconds.

"That was close." Glenn felt relieved.

He had endured the dizziness for only less than a minute, but in that minute, Glenn was extremely vulnerable to attacks, since he was stripped of his defense power completely. Luckily, when he was struggling, his chain mark released large amount of power which, in a sense, deterred potential invaders.

Glenn stepped backwards and carefully navigated away from the mushroom land.

Glenn was fortunate when the Gadflies saved his life by helping him regaining his consciousness. When the insects were acting in his belly to fight against his vertigo, Glenn felt that part or parts of his body were responding to the Gadflies. And the reaction affected Glenn in some strange way. Yet, he could not articulate how.

“Did the reaction relate to the special abilities of the Gadflies as mentioned in the books?” Glenn asked himself. “Does it have something to do with the Life Code?” Glenn packed a piece of the exploded mushroom, thinking that it may be used in later experiments for the Life Code.

Glenn was hungry now, and he took out two bars of compressed meat to satiate his hunger. When he was half full, his expression suddenly became intense.

“A chain mark that has over 30 points of power? Who could it be?”

At the time, Glenn and the mysterious man who both had over 30 points of power were sending out vigorous waves of signals that formed an unusual space.

“Who are you? Your chain mark has over 30 points of power—the first one I met here with such ability,” Glenn asked.

The other student looked horrifyingly pale. He ran his eyes through Glenn but did not reply. Instead, he played with a mouse that was standing on his shoulder.

“A mouse? The arrogance? Could it be Kyrie?” Glenn thought.

Glenn saw Kyrie back on the ship twice. The first time was when Kyrie and Bionna coming to the deck to watch the pirates who escaped. The other occasion was when Kyrie fought with Sorcerer Dior against the giant octopus. Ever since the students set their feet on the Black Isotta, Kyrie and Bionna — the two geniuses — had been taken away by the wrinkle-faced witch, and Glenn had never seen them, and vice versa. And the student looked extremely pale. That was why he could not recognize Kyrie in the first place.

“Kyrie?” Glenn attempted a question.

“Are you from the Black Isotta?” Kyrie reacted to the question.

“Ye...”

Glenn was interrupted. Kyrie didn't care where he was from or it could be said that he was afraid of meeting a schoolfellow because he had been told by his mentor to not to kill anyone who belonged to the Black Isotta. It would not be a sin if he was not aware of the sin when he committed it.

“You have a strong chain mark. Hope you could be a rival!” Kyrie's pale face turned vicious.

When Glenn heard the word “rival”, his body shook. He had witnessed what Kyrie was capable of back on the ship. In the school, he had been “taken care of” by the designated best sorcerers as a talented student. God knew how many powerful sorceries he commanded.

A creaking sound broke.

It turned out that Kyrie had forced an attack on Glenn. Glenn responded quickly by generating his Shield. The shield sagged greatly as if it was hit by something blunt.

The offense came quickly and went quickly, too. After the attack was retracted, the shield reverted to its original state.

To block the offense, Glenn had consumed a large share of his magical force.

“How powerful was that attack! It must have contained 80-90 points of offense power.” Glenn sweated.

80-90 points of offense power was a value that Glenn could not achieve!

“Haha, the shield worked good. Try this one!” Kyrie smiled.

Glenn did not have the time to take a preemptive strike, and the second assault came.

Undoubtedly, Glenn produced the shield again. This time, Glenn was attacked as if by a ramming rhinoceros. When the invisible force slammed the shield, Glenn’s magical force was immediately depleted. As a result, he was pushed 7 or 8 steps backwards before he could steady himself.

“The offense power exceeded 100 points. Even with the help of my magical ring, I can’t take any more such attacks.” Glenn was now in a dire situation. His life was in severe danger.

“That magical tool of yours is powerful. Receiving such a tool from your mentor will get you and your mentor punished, don’t you know that? You violated the Seven Rings’ rules,” Kyrie sneered.

Seizing the moment, Glenn produced the Firebird by consuming the magical force offered by his magical ring to take the initiative.

Kyrie pointed to the Firebird, and the bird then spun fast and was gone. Seconds later, it exploded about 200 meters away.

“No wonder he was reputed the most talented student in the last 100 years. The Lilith School of Sorcerers was right. He is way powerful than me.” Glenn sighed.

“Now, let’s try the physical attack.” Kyrie pulled out a dagger and threw it towards Glenn.

Glenn knew that the shield would not block the dagger since it had such low level of magical force. So he created the Vine to track

and hopefully entangle the dagger.

Surprisingly, the vine ensnared the dagger and pulled it to the ground.

“Haha, interesting.” The same smile appeared on Kyrie’s face.

“You are good. You have a powerful magical tool. More important than that, you are able to use it. Magical tools are levers, and you made good use of them. That is what is great about you.” Kyrie continued while Glenn was standing there, pretending to be fine.

“Still, you and your mentor have breached the Seven Rings rules for the trial. I will tell my mentor about it, and you will be punished.”

Kyrie finished the appraisal and the threat and then left.

Chapter 38: Nina Was Mired

“Nina! Nina!” Glenn shouted continuously into his crystal ball, trying to contact Nina to determine her location.

After a sizzling sound, Nina communicated her message to Glenn. “Glenn, are you doing okay?”

“Yeah, I am fine. What about your situation? Are you in any trouble? Did you contact other people in our team?” Glenn was not delighted. From the images received from his crystal ball, Nina was running in a panic and was ready to cry out.

“Glenn, several people are chasing me — people from the Compass School of sorcerers. I just heard from Lafite and Robin. They are coming for me. And Lowry is with me.”

Lowry was really into Nina despite her permanently injured eye. However, he had neither good appearance nor prowess in terms of sorcery. Besides, he came across as awkward in movement. So Nina had refused to accept his love.

“Why are they doing that?” Glenn sounded rather anxious.

“It was Lowry. He discovered a Moon Chirper. When we were digging, it chirped and attracted them. Ah...”

In the crystal ball, Glenn saw that Nina drop to the ground. Then the ball became dark and the contact was lost.

“She is in real trouble. The students from the Compass School won’t let her go with the Moon Chirper (a plant that is alive).” Glenn felt more worried.

The Moon Chirper was much sought after because it could double the efficiency of meditation, which could result in improvement of the practitioner’s mental strength. One prerequisite was that the Chirper had to be in the moonlight to work. A considerable number of sorcerers were interested in getting one.

Glenn cared for Nina. So, the moment he realized the danger she was in, he sprinted toward Nina.

As for Nina, the place where she tripped turned from hard ground to a swamp, and she was stuck.

“Nina!” Lowry cried out.

Lowry’s capabilities were mostly related to pharmaceuticals and thus, they couldn’t be put into use in rescuing Nina. Born into a fisher family, he had rough and dark skin, and he was slow with his words.

The Compass Schoolers were closing in. Since Nina was bogged, Lowry would undergo the same fate as her if he chose to stay.

And he stayed for the love of his life.

“Stop, or I will destroy the Chirper. I will definitely do it.” Lowry threatened the pursuers while holding the Chirper firmly in his hand.

The way Lowry protected Nina was desperate. If Chris — Nina’s brother — had been here, there wouldn’t have been a problem. The siblings had worked on a sorcery that would be brought to maximum power when one of the pair played an auxiliary role, and they had succeeded. Unfortunately, Chris was not here. Lowry was the only one Nina’s life depending on.

Lowry tightened his grip of the Chirper. The force made it scream like a baby, and its fluffy root swung as it wiggled its body.

“Is this a threat? Haha, We are not to be threatened. You do anything to the Chirper, and you will be dead.” The head pursuer returned in the same menacing voice. But he was frightened by the prospect of the Chirper being ruined.

Nina was struggling in the mire, and she had been immersed from below her waist. Nina had her mask on. So, even though she was feeling pathetic, not knowing if she was going to die this way, nobody could catch her expressions.

“Hello, belle. I couldn’t think of you dying so miserably. As long as you ask that stupid brat to give us the thing, you will be fine.” A member from the chasing team approached Nina, and stopped at the edge of the mire.

“No! Don’t you ever touch her! ” lowry’s threat turned into entreaty.

The hunting team had deemed Lowry as a coward who could not do something serious.

Nina’s mask was thrown off.

“Pukey. What an ugly freak.” The boy who produced a sorcery that peeled off Nina’s mask retched. He then turned to Lowry, with a livid expression on his face. “You give me that thing in three seconds or I will destroy you!”

Nina was now exposed. She was completely terrified. If one could see through the mire, they would see her legs trembling.

On hearing the threat, Lowry had lost his courage and threw the Moon Chirper into the air.

The head of the pursuing team became suddenly alert and was ready to catch the Chirper.

“What the f*ck! What is that?” The chief cursed.

When the Chirper was thrown to the apex, a student who was not known to any of the students present at the scene was seen in the tree, just a few meters away behind the Chirper. He then squirted his tongue. The tongue extended unbelievably and rolled up the Chirper.

The student had hidden himself in the tree since the bullying scene began, and nobody had sensed anything about his being here. If Glenn had been on the spot, he would have sensed his existence through his enhanced olfactory function. Interestingly enough, this boy was the one who had stalked Glenn and escaped when Glenn realized that he was being followed.

Chapter 39: The Love Dialogue

The Moon Chirper had disappeared with the man who hid himself in the tree. And on hearing Nina's message for assistance, Lafite and Glenn had been on their way there. Lafite arrived before Glenn, and with her was Alastair, whom Lafite ran into on her way here. Hardly had Lafite and Alastair arrived, when the gang of students from the Compass School fled. Lafite and Alastair's chain marks were sending powerful energy that scared the gutless students away. And Glenn was running towards Nina while pulling all stops. So, his high level energy was felt even miles away.

Lafite saved Nina from the swamp and asked her and Lowry to run. She then stationed with Alastair to face a tough adversary.

The man finally came into sight.

"No. It was Glenn's mask!" Lafite trembled. She recognized the ashen mask that person was wearing. It belonged to Glenn. The first thing that came into Lafite's mind was Glenn's death. Lafite speculated that the mask-wearer must have killed Glenn and had taken it as his own property. At the moment, Lafite's unspeakable fury and hatred blew up. She was determined to take revenge.

With a painful scream of resentment, Lafite took out an arrow, drew it and released it, which whizzed all the way to the stranger.

Startled at this surprising attack, Glenn yelped. His worried voice reached Lafite's ears.

"No! Is it Glenn? How could it be possible?" Lafite seemed to have lost her support and kneeled on the ground. She covered her face with her hands, looking aghast. She knew this arrow sorcery well. It was too powerful to be fended off or to be neutralized by an ordinary student. No one had been known to come out well from this sorcery.

The arrow seemed to be so enraged that it moved as if it was a

beam of light. Due to its high speed, the arrow produced a giant swirl and forced its way towards Glenn.

Lafite stared at the progressing whirl in astonishment. Nobody could be more clear about the effect of this sorcery than her — it was one of the most lethal sorceries in the world, and there was no way available to stop it. She was aware how the victim would die. The arrow would break into numerous leaves with sharp blades that would readily slice the enemy's throat.

“What have I done? I...I...Ah...” Lafite's face blanched. She was overwhelmed with tears.

Alastair who had been watching all this felt shocked. For one thing, he was frightened on seeing the sorcery she just used. The arrow moving at an incredibly high speed aside, it was radiating signals whose effect was as destructive as 100-point-degree energy, and it endured quite a long time. The sharp-tongued queen had been behaving in an overbearing way for a reason!

More than that, Alastair had never seen Lafite being so grieved. Lafite could be sentimental.

“Lafite, it's me.” Glenn said faintly as he approached Lafite.

“Glenn! Are you okay?” Lafite ran towards Glenn.

The swirl of leaves with sharp blades had faded away. Glenn's shield had worked its magic again. However, the whirl took a great deal of Glenn's magical force. The amount of it was even not less than what was consumed in the previous war with Kyrie.

“It's me, Lafite. I am fine.” Glenn embraced Lafite softly and kissed her forehead. And the next moment, he held her with his firm arms.

Alastair had met Glenn once in the Black Isotta. He was wearing that mask at the ball thrown by the Death Sail League. But now, when he watched Glenn, he doubted his memory because Glenn was waving out signals that were much stronger than Lafite's. It

was unbelievable.

“Glenn?” Alastair asked tentatively.

“Hmm,” replied Glenn who loosened Lafite and turned to Alastair. Alastair was a co-founder of the Death Sail League. He had Glenn’s respect.

It seemed to Alastair that Glenn was still that unsocialized guy, just as he remembered him. Although Glenn was pale, his faint look couldn’t be noticed by Alastair. What Alastair saw was a calm and fathomless man.

“Who could survive an attack with such power?” Alastair marveled. “No wonder Lafite refused Armida’s love several times, even though he was a good man. It was just that Glenn is better.”

Alastair was feeling complex emotions. He had been enjoying the respect paid by the League’s members, and sometimes, even complacency took over. He felt ashamed of his previous arrogance now. But he managed a smile at Glenn with grace. He then left to give them some privacy.

What had worried Glenn had happened at last. There was this deep pride in Lafite’s heart. She was kind-hearted, to be sure. But she was a proud girl. She had always been so. Her father, the governor of Bi Seer city, gave her the privilege of being proud.

“Have you been treating me like an idiot? Like some clown who performs for you?” Lafite looked serious and questioned.

“Why? What is going on?” Glenn returned a question.

“You have such strong energy signals, and you can even defend yourself from the Whirl of Leaves. How could you keep your capabilities from me for such a long time? Don’t you know I was worried about you for this Gory Test? How could you be such a callous man?” Lafite stepped back, and the look on her face said that Glenn was a stranger to her.

“No, I didn’t intend to do that. I was looking for the right

moment. That's all. I had no intention of keeping this from you." Glenn stepped forward. "You are the love my life. I am going to marry you some day."

"Love of your life? Marry? Hah! To marry someone who had been treated as a dork? To marry someone who puffed up herself with self-importance? That sounds to me an irony." Lafite look up to Glenn.

"No, you are important! You are the vine sorcerer. You have always been the one protecting me from danger, on the ship and in Black Isotta. I couldn't have lived without you." It was not that Glenn realized that only the mention of Lafite's strength would have the better chance of calming her down. He meant it. He had thought of Lafite as his protector, physically and mentally.

It had to be admitted that Lafite grinned when she heard "vine sorcerer". The word 'vine' was reminiscent of the days when she was with Glenn back on the ship that delivered them to the sorcerer school. Better, it reminded her when she hung in the air off the ship's hull and Glenn risked his life to come to her. It was Glenn who got down to the lifeboat and pulled her back.

Lafite had never thought she would love a person to such a degree — a mundane and even lowly peasant. But, when she was nestling in his arms the moment she was saved, she had thought that she was willing to dedicate all she had to him.

Lafite's sneer dissolved. Glenn's love dissolved it. She watched Glenn in silence. But her hands were still quivering.

Glenn noticed Lafite's situation, and he took out a stick and put it in Lafite's hand.

"Guess what this is? It is the booty I got from the mirror house! I need you to remember. No matter what happens, I will always be with you, to support you and to love you. But you will always be my protector." Glenn Looked into Lafite's eyes.

Chapter 40: Glenn's Team Reunited

Three days later, Glenn's team — Lafite, Chris, Nina, Robinson and Robin — reunited.

Alastair parted ways with Lafite when Glenn appeared. Alastair and Lafite were both great sorcery students. And they had a history in killing the knights for the kids on the ship. They could have made a good team. But Glenn's emergence as the vanguard for the team had shifted the landscape. Alastair was a driven man, and he thought that parting from the team was in his best interests.

Lowry left too, but for a different reason. He felt frustrated and humiliated about not being able to save Nina from the swamp. And Nina was insulted in front of him. He could not live with that fact. Lowry was not a warrior. But he stepped up at least, so he had Nina and the whole team's respect.

Lafite sat down on the body of a fallen tree in this Bremble Forest. She cleared out a plot of ground, which was covered with layers of leaves, then she laid the map on the ground.

"We are here." Lafite put a pin in somewhere on the map. "Based on our guess, the second shipment of mirrors is going to land in here. It's not far from us. So we're in a good position. And this valley is hidden in the depth of the woods. We are less likely to be disturbed."

"So we're safe for now?" Nina inquired.

"Yeah, unless someone speeds around and reveals his energy." Lafite squinted towards Glenn and snorted.

"Glenn, you are amazing. I've heard about how you shielded yourself from Lafite's arrow. How did you do that?" Robinson had learned part of the story. He was informed about Glenn's astonishing survival story but not of his big fight with Lafite.

Lafite cut in before Glenn could answer Robinson's question,

although Glenn had no intention to answer at all.

“He is amazing. He is without a doubt the best among us. But Robinson, at least you and I have fought together, and we know how we can strategize against a common foe. Him? A hermit! A loner at best.”

Robinson choked.

“Lafite is right. We can’t afford to work alone. We need to figure out how to cooperate. We need synergy,” said Chris who was holding an axe over his shoulder.

“Yeah, we need synergy.” Lafite had recovered her composure and emphasized “synergy”.

Chris’ sorceries were related to Hematology Sorcery and fell under the umbrella of violent offense. He could turn into a wolf while confronting an enemy. He would become faster and stronger. Glenn estimated his offense power ranging between 15 and 50 points, and for a second or so, it might exceed 70. That was awesome. But Chris’s current magical force could merely sustain three or four exercises of the sorcery. Power came at the cost of depletion of magical force. So if Chris could not take his rival down in three or four rounds, he would be in real danger.

That was when Nina and her sorcery came in handy. As mentioned before, Nina’s sorceries were mostly auxiliary. Specifically, she could transfer her magical force to the one who was in need of it. More wonderfully, she had mastered a sorcery that could replenish her magical force quickly. Besides, a sorcerer student’s magical force was roughly determined by his/her mental strength. To be precise, one’s magical force would fluctuate up and down around ten-times of his/her mental strength. For example, Glenn was tested by the crystal ball as having a mental strength of 13 points and a magical force of 125 points. In rare cases would one’s magical force surpass that 1:10 ratio. Nina was that rare case. She had a magical force that was much higher than ten times of

her mental strength. She and Chris together could overpower a beast.

“With Glenn’s great power, we fear nobody.” Chris boasted.

“We are not that strong. Nina and I are not good at close range fights.” Lafite warned.

As for Robinson, his sorceries were designed for guerrilla warfare. He was said to have studied dark elements, which made him more mobile and flexible in surveillance and in sneak attacks. And he was excellent in not getting caught.

Robinson’s girlfriend Robin had had a sorcery which Glenn disapproved of. It was associated with the Agreement Invoke. Living things on the Foreign Land were regarded as slaves for sorcerers. A level four sorcerer could own a regiment composed of slaves from the Foreign Land. Students were not qualified to obtain one for their use. However, they could invoke them through Agreement Invoke. Robin had gotten two by doing so.

One was a boar. It was 1.5 meters high and 4 meters long. As can be imagined, it was used to protect her from attacks. The other one was a green-eyed monkey. It would lie on her shoulder and acted as a third eye.

The group had already witnessed Lafite’s potent arrow. One thing that had not been mentioned was the arrow’s range. It could easily reach beyond 50 meters. That was not an unusual distance. What distinguished it was that it still carried a 30-40-point of energy even 50 meters after its launch. Glenn’s Firebird sorcery would decimate everything that came in the way, but it worked only within 15 meters. So it could be imagined what a threat that arrow meant. More horribly, she had four Hurricane arrows placed in the sheath on her back. If the arrow that hit Glenn had been one of them, Glenn would not have lived to see Lafite. Besides, Lafite had also learned something about medical treatment.

So they decided that Chris, Nina and Glenn were responsible for

the frontal offense. Lafite would flank. And Robinson was charged with detecting signs of potential invaders, and in certain circumstances, he would assume the task of distracting the enemy.

Night fell.

A black shadow sneaked into Glenn's tent. Glenn's sensitive nose had sensed the visitor, but he didn't move because it was Lafite. They started making out soon.

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Four days later, 14 students from the Light and Shade School of Sorcerers bumped into Glenn's team. It seemed that the school fellas had teamed up for a better survival rate.

"The Black Isotta?" The girl who was leading the team provoked. She was wearing a dress that had a slit a little below her waist in the front. A whip was wiggling in her hand. It was said to be a cane created using a Magical Tool. Some said it was a creature invoked from the Foreign Land.

"Hmm, kids from Light and Shade. [Son of Sun](#) defeated [GoldenEye](#), so what? Do you think you stand a chance of taking us?" Lafite was not afraid at all. She knew nothing about fear, and had Glenn.

Yesterday, GoldenEye had lost out to Son of Sun and was chased almost through the whole Testing Ground. The fight was seen by many.

That girl watched and licked her lips with her tongue. She still hadn't decided whether to give the order for attack.

"What are they waiting for? To fight or to surrender? What are they nagging about?" Chris was vexed.

"Hah. We'd better listen to Lafite. We're aiming for the second batch of mirrors. The Magical Tools are deemed to cause real trouble to even the [Desperaters](#). We will try to gain the initiative," said Robin as she tried to calm Chris down.

Son of Sun and GoldenEye are among the Desperaters, the ones who are so powerful that they make their opponents desperate. In the brochure sent out to the students by each school before the test, it records seven Desperaters from six sorcery schools. They were deemed as potential sorcerers and had been received as students by senior students or even sorcerers. Son of Sun is from the Light and Shade and Golden Eye is from the Black Isotta.

# Chapter 41: Belle

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The face-off between the Light and Shade School students and Glenn's group was not fueled to a conflagration. Instead, it was quenched. As the two groups were at the edge of a full-out war, three huge waves of energy rustled the tree leaves over their heads. It was the Son of Sun running in a mad dash, and behind him, GoldenEye, the Immortal, and the Transformer — the three Desperaters from the Black Isotta — were pursuing him, trying to hunt him down.

They rushed by the two groups just a few meters away.

The Black Isotta's three theoretically best students had joined hands. They would undoubtedly smite their opponent.

The 14 students from the Light and Shade were well aware of that fact, and they made a sensible decision to end the fight with Glenn's group.

Time moved on, and the second shipment of mirrors arrived. Glenn's group could feel the roaring waves of magical force surging towards them.

Lafite was perched on a high tree.

"It's about 1,700 meters away from us, on our southwest side." Lafite had found where the second batch of mirrors had landed. She had splendid eyesight when she transformed her right eye into an eagle eye. She could clearly see a human-sized object from several kilometers away.

"Yo! Go take it." Chris grunted back to Lafite and galloped like a primitive towards the direction she pointed.

Robin tagged along. She mounted that massive boar and drove it at the heels of Chris. Stretches of grass were trampled underfoot and fell over as the boar bellowed on. And Robinson jumped onto that boar Robin was riding.

“Lafite, catch us up!” Robinson’s voice stuttered as the boar was jolted on.

Apart from her eagle eye, Lafite had a pair of wings made up of leaves. She flapped her wings lightly and steadily until she reached the ground.

“The landing spot of the mirror was not as we’ve expected. So there might be something going on. Glenn, you keep an eye on Nina.” Lafite urged Glenn.

Lafite was not asking Glenn to protect her just because she was swifter than Nina. The more important reason was Lafite’s pride.

“Oh.” Glenn nodded.

Glenn didn’t say anything. His countenance could not be deciphered as he still had that mask on his face. But his voice was calm. Nina and Lafite were both reassured.

The three followed up.

At the mirror drop point, an altar rose up from below the ground. As the altar ceased ascending, a fist-sized bead appeared in the middle of it. It was like a source of energy and was glowing brilliantly. If someone had watched it for a minute, he/she might have been blinded.

Six pillars were holding up the altar. Each was at a distance of several dozen meters. There were numinous symbols inscribed on them. Something seemed to be enclosed in between the pillars.

“Haha, I’m the first one.” A female student had arrived at the mirror’s location. She had outrun the other competitors because she, like Lafite, had wings. Lafite’s wings were leaves, and hers were powered by wind element.

She settled herself in front of the altar. She then watched the bead, which was hanging in the middle of the pillars. It actually kept moving, but it had not changed its place at all. The girl’s eyes were filled with yearning to get the bead immediately.

She had a second thought. There was a voice in her head saying:

“Treasured things like this must be guarded by something, maybe something hidden in the dark, or there might be a trap—”

The girl decided to dictate somebody to do some investigation for her. She murmured something, and a mouse emerged.

“Go get it, my little mouse baby.”

“POOF!”

The mouse vanished the moment it entered the altar.

“No!” The girl bemoaned the loss of her prized mouse for a few seconds. She then continued, “Something moved. I saw it. For a second, it sparkled. Is there really a guardian that can’t be seen? Whatever that man or thing is, it moved fast. I could barely see it.”

The girl wasn’t tempted to encroach on the territory again. So she found a clean ground and sat down, awaiting the late arrivals to unravel the mystery.

Four students penetrated through the thick forest and arrived at the mirror site. They had chain marks that contained neither mediocre nor super energy.

“Hello?” A boy out of the four students approached her and inquired.

“I know what’s in your head. That bead over there is guarded by something. I’ve tried, but I couldn’t get it.” The girl leered at him.

“Humph! You don’t know what I am capable of!” The boy retorted, gnashing his teeth.

The boy fished out a bird from his robe. It was emerald and had a sharp beak. The bird took to the air and flew towards the altar.

The same poofing sound broke. The bird, to the four students’ amazement, disappeared. The girl had expected it.

Several dozen students came in droves. But nobody dared to go



near to the altar after being notified of the horror stories about how the mouse and the bird were eradicated.

Around half an hourglass had passed, and the crowd began to appear restless. The altar and the bead was a ready meal which they could not relish. It was their hope that at least someone could cause some stir to make the game less boring.

To their surprise, someone did come.

It was one of the Desperaters — The HalfRobot.

There were a total of seven Desperaters in this Bramble Forest. And the second batch of mirrors had arrived at ten separate sites. So the probability that each of the sites would be visited by a Desperater was high.

“A Desperater, did you see it?!” A student went wild with joy. He thought that the one who could break the shield of the pillars or defeat the protector hidden somewhere had eventually arrived.

The HalfRobot got his nickname because he had an artificial arm. It was made with iron and steel or some kind of synthetic metal. Nobody was sure if his actual arm was “artificial” or was concealed in the artificial one. He also had a mechanical tail that wagged like that of a scorpion. The whole picture was too grim to look at.

To the crowd’s great surprise, he didn’t say or do anything regarding raiding the altar and taking the bead.

“He must know something about the altar, or he wouldn’t let this golden opportunity slip away.” A student suspected.

“I hope the altar isn’t something horrible. The sorcerers might have designed it to weed the weak out,” another student responded.

As the students were agitatedly chattering, the forest thundered.

Chris came into their sight, followed by Robin and Robinson riding the boar.

“It’s you guys. Do you remember me?” The three members of Glenn’s group were greeted by the girl who had arrived first.

“It’s me, Belle. We met at our first class in the Black Isotta. Lecture Hall nine?” The girl became excited.

“Yeah. I remember.” Robinson replied.

The girl had been there in Glenn’s first class. A boy named Thomas was pursuing her and had tried to grab Nina’s seat for her because the Hall was crammed and no seat was left. Unfortunately, the boy was slapped in the face by the Mind Master through hypnotization. Alastair had been with the Mind Master at the time. He had developed feelings for that girl— Belle— since then.

## Chapter 42: The Virtual Helminth

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After Lafite arrived at the mirror drop place, she and Belle exchanged greetings. Lafite didn't think highly of Belle though. Belle had rejected Alastair's love because of his "poor" standing in the Black Isotta despite the fact that Alastair had created the Death Sail League, whose influence had been spreading across the school.

But Lafite had no interest in prying into this petty inconsequential matter. Soon, she used her eagle eye trying to catch sight of the hidden protector in the altar.

The search turned out to be a disappointment.

"I couldn't see anything. It either hid itself under the ground or it's totally invisible." Lafite speculated.

Lafite then retracted her eagle eye and turned to Robin.

"Why not try your monkey? Isn't it able to see strange beings like ghosts and spirits?"

"The keeper of the bead is a ghost or a spirit?" Robin was startled. "Okay. I will do that."

The green-eyed monkey also could not discover anything after several attempts.

Glenn's group and the other students on site were dejected.

"Let me go into the altar. I am fast. I can make it there and get out safe." Robinson offered.

Robinson's suggestion met Robin's immediate veto.

"I will do it. I will go there." It was Glenn who made the proposal this time. Before anyone, Lafite in particular, could frown upon it, Glenn explained:

"I don't have to actually enter the altar. All I have to do is to get near it, and I can make out whatever is guarding that altar using my ability to smell."

“Use your nose? I didn’t know you’d cultivated the olfactory sorcery!” Lafite cast a disdainful look at Glenn.

Glenn smiled.

Lafite must have forgotten Canine Olfactory Enhancement and Odor Mapping, the very book she threw onto the ground in Zi Jue Residence. Old Ham was alive back then, and Glenn had served for her.

The book had endowed Glenn with a quasi-canine olfactory ability.

Glenn walked imperceptibly towards the six pillars. In a few steps, he halted. He focused his attention on his nose and sniffed.

“Grass, mushrooms, rotten twigs, human body scents, bird wastes...” Glenn mumbled a list of smells that seemed endless.

The crowd had been waiting for half an hourglass. They had become irked.

“Holy shit. No particular smell points to the protector lying in the altar. The thing is really a ghost.” Glenn stamped his right foot on the ground.

Glenn’s failure frightened everybody.

Glenn was not a type of man who would give up when faced with difficulties. That inimitable resilience was in his nature. Besides, he had been in close contact with some of the sorcerers in the Black Isotta—at the cost of his consumption of magical stones—and the proximity to them had enabled him to see that there would always be a way for the seemingly insolvable problem.

“I should try the Ashen Mask’s echo-location,” Glenn said to himself.

Eyes closed, Glenn released waves of audio signals through the mask towards the altar. The audio waves were reflected back to him. He was thrilled and sent more waves to the altar. As the

signal-sending process accelerated, the reflected waves accumulated. Subsequently, an obscure outline of something gradually came into being. The thing was huge. It almost crammed the space between the six pillars.

“What the hell is that?” Glenn’s heart tightened.

As more audio waves were thrown back to Glenn, he could see it more clearly. The thing existed in the form of a liquid. Glenn could see through it since it was transparent. It was struggling and attempting to get out of the altar. However, it was enclosed by something like fluid “plastic” films.

Still, the thing was a blur. And when Glenn opened his eyes and saw it using his normal human eyes, the thing became invisible again.

Glenn retreated to his group and told everything he saw to his friends.

The group members were amazed and had nothing to comment, except for Robin.

“I might know what the thing is. I learned about it when I was studying a book about the Agreement Invoke. The sorcerers called it the Virtual Helminth.”

Robin expounded it further.

“According to the book, we are living in a three-dimensional world. Length, breadth, and depth comprise the space we are in. And we also exist in time. There are living things that reside in a world that contains more than three dimensions. There are also living things existing in a world that contains less than three dimensions. Living things that exist in different worlds have their own understanding of time and space, and thus, they are mutually invisible and would exert no impact on each other even if they are lying in the same physical location. Some sorcerers analysed relevant data and concluded that in certain cases—in dreams for

example—living things in different dimensions might meet and see each other.”

Lafite, Glenn, Chris, Nina and Robinson gazed at Robin and couldn't say a word. Such advanced sorcery knowledge belonged to the areas of research for level four and higher sorcerers.

“And the world we live in consists of two parts: the physical world and the virtual world. The virtual world cannot be separated from the physical world because the former is, as the book said it, a shadow of the latter. And the virtual world is, in essence, some sort of glue that holds the physical world together and keeps it stable.”

Robin became radiant as she was in the “spotlight” now.

“So what about this Virtual Helminth?” Glenn asked.

“Virtual Helminths secrete the glue. The glue has two functions. One is to keep the physical world together. The other is that it cuts the virtual world off from the physical world and prevents them from connecting. In this way, the two worlds are sustained.”

“In other words, without the Virtual Helminths and the glue they produce, the worlds would become one. The consequence would be horrible.” Robin proceeded.

“Still, how can we deal with this Virtual Helminth and get the bead it is guarding?” Lafite cut in. She was a practical woman. For her, the priority now was to get the bead to increase the chances of survival.

“Virtual world beings cannot live in the physical world for long and vice versa. If that thing in the altar is indeed a Virtual Helminth and belongs to the virtual world, then it is dying by the minute. Only, the way it dies varies from us. It dies from within. The good news is that the more things the Virtual Helminth touches in the physical world, the faster it dies.”

“So we throw things into the altar?” Lafite rejoiced.

“Yes,” replied Robin.

# Chapter 43: Glenn Got The Bead

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Glenn's group kept throwing rocks, twigs, lumps of clays, you name it, into the altar. And three days had passed on. Most of the people had left since they had nothing at their disposal to deal with the hidden protector. Only around a dozen people remained. Those who had stayed ran into several skirmishes, but nothing disastrous was inflicted.

It was a moonlit night. The audio waves sent back to Glenn using echolocation was telling Glenn that the Virtual Helminth was under one tenth of its body to vanish.

"It's about time!" Glenn nodded his head to his group.

Lafite, Chris and others replied by nodding. They had concurred for the final attack.

Carrying many materials with them, the team sneaked towards the altar .

The group stepped softly to not to wake up any of the students, who were either asleep or were meditating. But they couldn't proceed without waking up the ones who had maintained their vigilance and were waiting for the moment to come.

"Finally, someone has cracked the code!"

It was the HalfRobot. He had been sitting there, keeping his eyes and mouth shut, until Glenn's team moved towards the altar. He then sprung up and rushed towards the altar.

Although the HalfRobot moved fast, he didn't disturb the ones who were in their dreams.

Glenn's team had been in the altar. The Virtual Helminth shrunk much faster as humans approached it. Glenn estimated that it would be gone forever after it breathed another several times.

Glenn was in a bliss. Once the powerful bead hanging in the air

became his property, even the Desperaters would dread him. The bead itself would play a deterring role to the Desperaters, whether by enhancing Glenn's existing capabilities or by endowing him new, deadly skills. It was said the bead could make its owner ride the wave of this Gory Test and get out of it safe and sound.

As Glenn was extending his hand to get the bead, a menacing voice came.

"Keep it where it is. I'm taking that!" The HalfRobot had emerged only ten meters away from Glenn's team.

Accompanying the HalfRobot's voice, a large disk spun forward at Glenn.

Glenn retreated a few steps and stamped on Lafite.

"I'll take that." Chris turned into a wolf and growled. He brandished his axe, jumped out of the altar at the swishing disk targeted at Glenn, and hacked it.

"Wow, a 70 point power!" Glenn yelled, "What a miracle!"

An ordinary student had held off the disk attack of the HalfRobot—a Desperater. That was indeed a miracle.

A huge sound broke as Chris's axe stopped the disk. But it was too soon to celebrate. Although the disk had stopped moving forward, it kept wheeling fast and produced a strong magnetic force. As a result, his axe was sucked to it, and Chris's claws, which were made of metal, were pulled to the disk, too. In less than a second, Chris had been deprived of his weapons and had been rendered non-threatening.

Before anyone could react, Lafite played her trump card. She pulled a Hurricane arrow. With a thumping sound, the arrow was let flying towards the HalfRobot. It moved so fast that a whirl of wind came into being. It was larger than the one that had hit Glenn.

Soon, the HalfRobot was swallowed by the whirl. The leaves in it



kept cutting and slicing him.

Everyone—Glenn’s teammates and the others who had been jerked out of their dreams—watched the HalfRobot suffering in the whirl.

In the meantime, the disk had lost its pulling strength, and Chris recovered his weapons.

As the whirl diminished and then disappeared a minute later, people could see what had happened to the poor HalfRobot: his clothes were gone, muscles were minced; his mechanical tail seemed to have undergone malfunction and sank down listlessly on the ground, and his arm sparkled!

“The Hurricane Arrow! It’s ridiculously strong. You just triumphed over a Desperater!” Glenn marveled, “What a pity that you have only three of them now!”

Lafite didn’t reply to Glenn’s compliment. Her face was terribly pale, and the next second, she almost collapsed. It turned out that the Hurricane Arrow had depleted her magical force.

And the HalfRobot was not subdued. He took back his disk and aimed it at Nina and Robin!

At the same time, seven mechanical bugs came out of from his sleeve and flew towards the bead.

Robinson and Chris ran towards the two girls to rescue them immediately. This time, the disk was more powerful and worse still, Chris had consumed most of his magical force and was unable to replenish it within such short a span of time. Nina could have done that, but she herself was being targeted!

Glenn was holding his weak Lafite and could not help them, let alone the bead was about to be grabbed by the bugs.

“We need the bead to survive! Glenn, leave me here and go to take it before the bugs do it.” Lafite looked into Glenn’s eyes. She said imploringly.

Glenn wouldn't abandon Lafite, and he didn't.

At the time, Robinson, Robin, Chris and Nina were all down. They couldn't take the Desperater on.

Seconds before the bugs were going to snatch the bead, an idea occurred to Lafite.

"Use the stick you got from the mirror house! Use it to delay them!"

"Right. To hypnotize them!"

Glenn took the stick out from Lafite's pocket, pointed it at the bugs while he enchanted something. The bugs were indeed being "slow motioned". They moved like snails as if it would take half a day to get to the bead.

As soon as they had dealt with that threat, another came.

The HalfRobot was exasperated by Glenn slowing his bugs down and produced a beam of golden light, which contained an unbelievable level of energy.

As the light was closing in on Glenn and Lafite, a gust of wind blew through the forest. It rustled the student's robes and Lafite's hair.

Glenn was calm and he comforted Lafite.

"I'm here. He can't do you any harm!" Glenn lightly kissed Lafite's forehead.

Glenn then turned around and faced that golden light. The next second, he produced his Firebird and the shield. After he gave the order, the firebird charged at the HalfRobot and set him in blaze. At the same time, the light hit the shield and exploded.

The Firebird could not have caused too much damage to a Desperater, but Glenn had used that stick again, which provided 40 points of offense power. The HalfRobot extinguished the fire by rolling himself on the ground. But he had received grave injuries

from that high energy fire.

“I got it!” Robin exclaimed from inside the altar. When the Desperater was on fire, she had arrived at the altar, and taken the bead.

The HalfRobot stared at Robin ferociously and then turned his eyes to Glenn. He said nothing and left.

The Desperater was gone. The Virtual Helminth was gone. And Glenn had obtained the bead.

# Chapter 44: The Seven Desperaters Gathered

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“Is that mask guy also a Desperater?” The HalfRobot shook his head and sighed, pondering why a student like Glenn had such inconceivable powers.

The HalfRobot’s skin had been shredded, and his machine tail and arm had been sabotaged and did not function momentarily. He was exasperated and shouted from the distance: “Glenn, I’m expecting to see you where the third mirrors are dropped!” As the HalfRobot’s voice halted, the disk lying on the ground was sucked up through the forest and came to him.

At the battle ground, the pillars supporting the altar had disappeared, and people excluding Glenn’s team had taken flight and ran off into the night.

Lafite put the Hurricane arrow back into her sheath. She had used this second arrow to call the bluff. That was one of the reasons why the HalfRobot took to his heels.

“We are completely safe now! We do not have to be afraid of the Desperaters from other schools now.” Lafite thrilled as she took the bead from Robin.

The rest of Glenn’s team converged around Lafite, with their wide open eyes, staring at the bead.

“My Goodness! I bet it contains more than 100 points energy!” Chris cried out.

“Yeah, there is that much power in the bead, and the Desperaters are not gonna mess with us unless they have to,” Glenn replied.

Now the group had been relieved. They searched for a more secluded place and set up a tent for rest.

The next morning’s sun rose. The team went outside the tent to

enjoy the fresh air that belonged exclusively to forests.

Lafite rested her head on Glenn's shoulder and said lightly:

"I was thinking about your suggestion last night. I still think it's too dangerous."

"What's dangerous?" Chris turned about and looked serious. "We have the bead now. What would be a danger to us?"

"It's...it's about the third mirror release. I wanna get it." Glenn stuttered, yet his voice was resolved.

"But why? We've got the bead and that alone will keep us off from any sh\*t." Chris doubted Glenn's presence of mind.

The other team members aimed surprised looks at Glenn. The ambience became depressing. Seeing this, Lafite cut in before Chris could respond.

"Glenn. You will put us in great peril! I know you helped a lot in getting this bead. But you're not supposed to do that, to risk the team's life. The third mirrors were meant for the Desperaters."

These blunt remarks caused a sharp twinge in Glenn's heart.

"Okay." Glenn returned a short reply and went back into the tent.

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It was the 20th day of the test. Right in the middle of the test ground, seven, huge, weird pillars broke the ground and rose high into the air gradually.

Almost at the same time, a blast of energy waves traversed through the forest. Tall trees curved and grass plunged as the waves passed along.

It was the seven Desperaters who were heading for the pillars. The third "batch" of mirror had been delivered by those sorcerers who had been overseeing the test outside of the forest.

Unlike the prior two batches, there was only one mirror as an award. The first arrival—the stick as the award—had 100, and the second arrival—the bead as the prize—had ten. So the only mirror trophy attracted the seven Desperaters to it.

The three Desperaters from the Black Isotta—the Golden Eye (Bionna), the Transformer(Kyrie) and the Immortal (Sam)—were stationed together in front of the pillars. There was also the Son of Sun, who was once being chased by Kyrie, Bionna and Sam together, the HalfRobot and the Ghost Burglar, the one who had stolen the Moon Chirper by hiding in the tree. The last one was the Charmer.

The Son of Sun turned out to be a girl, and as her name implied, she carried with her fiery energy. Maybe because of that, she was wearing an outfit that covered as little of her body as possible. The Son of Sun was said to be the best among the seven Desperaters. And she indeed looked overbearing. When she moved, her energy waves given out from her forehead chain could be felt from beyond 300 meters.

The seven of them exchanged glances. Each was on high alert for attacks from the others while taking care to not to be the initiator of a great war.

Bionna looked terrible. She diverted her attention from that arrogant Son of Sun and inquired Kyrie.

“Kyrie, about the masked guy you mentioned, do you really think he was as good as us?”

By “us”, Bionna meant the Desperaters. Being fawned upon as one of the Desperaters for long, she had been used to and even developed a taste for that title.

Bionna’s doubt was met with a firm nod, although it was Kyrie’s mouse that did it. The next moment, Kyrie said.

“If you were saying defense power, he’s as good as us. That Son

of Sun couldn't do anything about him."

Bionna was relieved for a second because she was thinking of teaming up with Glenn. But moments later, she hesitated.

"So we would have another adversary in the Seven Rings tryout?"

"Nah, I don't think so. He's good because he has that Magical Tool—that mask of his. He won't get a Tool better than that."

Sam was also negative about Glenn taking part in the tryout.

"His mentor shouldn't have given him such a fancier tool allowing for his student status. He's only a third year student! And he used it all the time! Even if he could make it out of this test, he would be punished, and that punishment, I'm sure, would disqualify him for the tryout."

Hearing two of her partners saying this, Bionna's worries lessened. Yet her heart was still disturbed by that masked man. It was just a feeling, though.

"So, we might team up with him—that masked man? That Son of Sun was a difficult person!" Bionna asked the two men.

"She just has the biggest offense points. There are other things to consider when in a fight. That Ghost Burglar could contend with her for sure!" Kyrie was defiant of the allegedly best fighter in this forest.

The Son of Sun was watching as the Black Isotta Desperaters were discussing. She sneered to herself.

"Humph, you've got the mask man, huh?" The Son of Sun made a fire in her hand and started playing with it.

Chapter 45: A Potential Desperater

Glenn had been moping around for days. He hated that Lafite was not being supportive of his plan. He watched her lying next to him and asked himself.

“Is she the right one? She seems to be pushy and controlling. And she couldn’t think less of my esteem sometimes!” Glenn was torn by this idea because he loved her.

Would Lafite be a boon to Glenn on his road to be a great a sorcerer? Nobody knew. Would she be a hurdle then? That was not known, either.

What was clear was that Glenn slipped out of the tent the night when the third mirror arrived.

Under the cloak of darkness, Glenn moved along alone through the forest towards the mirror drop site. He made his way as slowly as possible to keep his energy signals under check. One little inattentive action might cost his life now since the seven Desperaters had congregated.

As Glenn drew near to the mirror place, he found a house similar to the one where he had obtained the stick. There were seven entrances leading inside of it. The Desperaters were garrisoned at the four corners of the house, their eyes sweeping across the forest.

“Why are they just watching the house? Why don’t they go in there?” Glenn became skeptical.

The next day, a few students, who had exaggerated opinions of their abilities, intruded on the house and ended up as dead bodies.

Glenn was lurking in a position facing a house corner that had low security. The rest of the corners were either guarded by the Daughter of Sun, or by two or three Desperaters together. Because of that, most of the students driven by the mystery inside the house had aggregated here, biding their time.

To avoid unnecessary conflicts with the others, Glenn had hidden himself underground using the Cylix, one of the gifts from Sorcerer Elaine.

On the third day, seven or eight bold students broke the frontier, and unsurprisingly, they were killed in varied, awful ways.

On the fourth day, two students were emboldened and challenged the Desperaters' authority, because they also had the "bead". They thought that the guardians might be easily deterred by the power of this bead. It turned out to be a stupid move. As the two students threatened to enter the house by detonating the bead, the HalfRobot, who had recovered from his injury, swung his tail at the bead, which was knocked a kilometer away. And they were then mercilessly destroyed.

To the HalfRobot's amazement, the bead exploded after receiving such a strong impact. Following a loud explosion, a mushroom shaped cloud was lifted off the ground.

For the next few days that ensued, no students had the guts to take a step forward towards the house. Now they knew this truth:

"The pursuit of one's dream has a cost!"

It was the 26th day of the First Year Students Test and there were only four days to carry on through this inferno.

Safe being under the ground, Glenn had collected six bodies that had not been hashed up for a study of the Desperaters' way of killing.

When sorcerer Elaine gave Glenn the Cylix, she also offered him the Buzzing bugs. As Elaine had exhorted, if the bugs were nurtured in dead bodies, they would integrate into a large Buzzing bug to safeguard Glenn for a day. Breeding a Buzzing bug moved up into high priority because Glenn had made a decision to make a move on the house.

After some careful research, a superficial conclusion had been

made: Some of them died from sorceries related to the [Earth element and the Wood element](#), and one was poisoned to death.

The Earth and Wood elements are two elements of the Five Elements, or the Five Agents, meaning "the five types of chi dominating at different times". It is a fivefold conceptual scheme that many traditional Chinese fields used to explain a wide array of phenomena, from cosmic cycles to the interaction between internal organs, and from the succession of political regimes to the properties of medicinal drugs. The "Five Agents" are Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal, and Water. This order of presentation is known as the "mutual generation" sequence. In the order of "mutual overcoming", they are Wood, Earth, Water, Fire, and Metal.

Glenn didn't know how exactly the elements killed the students, neither could he figure out the poisoning. Yet Glenn did bring with him two vials of potent antidotes. One was to reduce the effect of floral secretions, and the other was for metal element intoxication. He had bought them from the trade market on the ground floor of the Black Tower.

After Glenn had set the bugs free into the bodies, an intensive buzzing noise was heard. The droning sound kept on for about an hourglass after which the bodies turned into bare skeletons. No human flesh was left! All the mature bugs were then polymerized and grew to be a three meter long beast.

What distinguished Glenn's personal mount was that they were mentally connected. In other words, the huge Buzzing bug was his Soul Slave and would serve him without a complaint, although the service expired a day after.

Followed by the majestic-looking monster, Glenn surfaced out of the ground.

As Glenn made his way through the jungle, he "saw" someone slide right before him using his Ashen Mask's echo-location feature. Yet, as Glenn sent out more audio signals trying to catch

it, it vanished from his sight.

“Strange! How can someone disappear like this? It was so fast!” Glenn sniffed, “No! It’s you. Show yourself!”

No one replied.

“Come on, stop the hiding. It’s you. You are the man who had stalked me once!” Glenn sounded firm.

“Haha, great! You’ve earned the name! You have been on fire these days.” A man bored the ground and exposed his upper body in the air.

“What name? Who are you? And what are you here for?” Glenn sulked because this mysterious man had followed him constantly.

“A potential Desperater! That was what they were saying about you. You shielded Kyrie’s offense, and nearly wrecked that pathetic HalfRobot. I’m the Ghost Burglar, by the way.” This Desperater displayed a look of contempt when saying this, although he did not mean it. He was accustomed to sneering!

The Buzzing bug was enraged. It was not enraged for no reason. As said earlier, its mind and Glenn’s were associated. It was infuriated because Glenn had lost his temper and got ready to take this sly enemy down.

In two seconds, the Buzzing bug arrived before the Desperater with a terrible crash. The large footprints stirred up the dusts around and almost blurred the scene.

As the dust cleared, the Ghost Burglar had vanished from the point where he was standing, and the next moment, he reappeared on a tree that was located a dozen meters away.

Before the Bug went for him, Glenn produced the Firebird to be after him.

The Ghost Burglar played the same trick again. Just before the Firebird caught him, he transported himself to a hill a kilometer

away in the twinkling of an eye.

“You are so crabby! I will ask the other guys to deal with you!” The Ghost Burglar’s voice reached Glenn through a certain frequency spectrum, so even though he said these words from several kilometers away, every word could still be heard clearly.

Chapter 46: The Column of Fire and the Waterspout

A column of fire, which was three meters wide in radius, was sweeping through the forest. Streaks of land filled with vegetation had been scorched. And unfortunately, the moving fire post was aiming for Glenn.

Glenn was watching this while thinking of his capabilities being greatly overshadowed by Daughter of Sun, who he knew had set ablaze this fire.

“She must have over 30 points of mental strength to cast such an amazing sorcery!” Glenn marveled in awe. The fire column prompted his memory of Sorcery Dior’s ice column in resistance against the tentacles on the ship.

For a moment, Glenn neglected the fact that this fire was targeting him. As the heat wave nearly seared him, he was awakened from his memory; the fire had already encircled him. He protected himself by using the shield.

But soon, Glenn realized that he was going to die in a minute because a fifth of his magical strength had been used up in less than ten seconds.

The only thought in his mind was to escape.

But there was another difficulty: he had found himself in the middle of a blazing ground, and he couldn’t tell which direction would lead him out of this burning hell.

Glenn picked up a random direction and took a run. Yet, he couldn’t run out of the fire as if he was restricted in a melting pot and every place was inflamed.

Daughter of Sun was perching on the top of a tree. Steam was gushing upward from behind her feet. She had nearly none clothes to cover her white body now. She was actually controlling the

movement of the fire to surround Glenn. The fire column followed him wherever he fled to.

Wherever the column fire had touched had been then burned to ashes.

In a tree far away, the Ghost Burglar was taking his pleasure in enjoying some crimson fruits. He seemed to be delighted at this “fight” or even enchanted!

“What a gorgeous scene! It’s the third time I’m seeing the Sun’s Daughter flexing her power, and I’m still not getting bored. The fire is purely an art!” The Ghost Burglar spit the fruit’s pit and laughed to himself.

Half a minute minute had passed. The section of forest Glenn ran through was completely charred. It was like a scene that appeared on the doomsday.

Glenn was now in a desperate situation. His magical force was about to run out out in a few seconds, and without the shield, he would be melted into liquid.

A cloud fell on Daughter of Sun’s brow.

“Why is he not dying?! Why doesn’t he die?!” Daughter of Sun cried, and she had to halt the fire to take a rest.

Glenn was a lucky dog, having avoided being burned, yet his arms and back had been covered in blisters. Worse, he had lost most of his consciousness since his magical force had been drained up, not to mention that the high temperature almost gave him a stroke.

Glenn's breathing was barely perceptible at the time.

As the old saying went, “house leakage happens on a rainy day, and a broken ship runs into headwind.” Glenn’s nemesis—HalfRobot— came for his life.

Daughter of Sun had gone for Glenn for a strategic reason. If

Glenn lived to join hands with the three Desperaters from the Black Isotta, she would be reduced to passivity. But for HalfRobot, he just wanted revenge.

HalfRobot turned up and kicked Glenn on his shoulder.

“Hah? Aren’t you that all-powerful divinity? Why are you under my foot now? Where is your bloody bird, anyway?” The HalfRobot chortled.

Glenn was still unconscious and thus was unable to fight. He was at the machine’s mercy.

HalfRobot mobilized his tail and whipped it at Glenn’s head, and the Ashen Mask couldn’t work its magic again without its master’s order.

Even the Ghost Burglar lost grip of the fruit in his hand after seeing this. He was sort of disappointed at the prospect of a shortened action scene.

“Ah—” A roaring sound thundered, which jolted Glenn back into life.

It was the Buzzing bug that had played the heroic role. For all this time, it had been taking cover behind trees and biding the time to his rescue. The Bug rammed HalfRobot and knocked him on the ground.

Daughter of Sun became impatient. She wanted to end this quickly. The second column of fire whizzed at Glenn.

The devil’s talons were here for Glenn’s life again.

HalfRobot drew back immediately as he knew its effect. But Glenn was too weak to take any action.

The Bug growled the second time, but this time, it sounded gloomily, as if it knew it was going to perish.

The next moment, the Bug pushed off the ground, galloped and pounced high into the air to Daughter of Sun.

Daughter of Sun was startled, and in no time, she dodged the Bug by jumping back onto the ground. She then moved her hands to direct the Fire Column to the Bug.

The Bug had no shield for its protection, so, the moment it was attacked by the Fire, it was obliterated. Nothing was left except for a miserable scream.

As Daughter of Sun turned her attention back to Glenn, he was nowhere to be found.

Kyrie, the Transformer, had gotten Glenn out under the nose of HalfRobot.

“That bitch has gone mad! Bionna will delay him, and I will send you somewhere safe.” Kyrie looked into Glenn’s eyes.

Kyrie spun his body and Glenn’s, and the next second, their bodies twisted and reappeared 200 meters away!

Glenn threw up because of this transfer. He sat down and began to replenish his magical force by consuming an intermediate magical stone. Seeing such a fancy stone, a surprised look appeared on Kyrie’s face.

“Bionna, it’s always a pleasure to see you!” Daughter of Sun’s pretty face displayed a ray of grimness.

“Save these polite sh*t! Let’s take a roll.” The Golden Eye Bionna snapped.

Daughter of Sun was enraged and produced the column of fire to get Bionna. On Bionna’s part, she focused all her power to her eye and shot out a waterspout from her mouth.

The waterspout was pure azure. It darted through the air to battle with the fire.

Chapter 47: The Chase

A moment later, embroiled in a tough fight against both Sam and Bionna, the Daughter of Sun, Mina, appeared to be losing. However, with an unexpected scream, she radiated dazzling lights and tremendous heat, overwhelming her two enemies all of a sudden. And the lights forced Glenn, whose magical force had almost recovered, to look away and close his eyes.

"Haha, as I'd expected, the mad woman played the same trick! Glenn, have a good rest here and try to restore your magic power soon. You'll need to be joining us in chasing that crazy woman if she tries to escape. This time we'll definitely teach her a lesson she will never forget!" Said Kyrie, wearing a crazily ferocious excitement on his pale face.

Glenn nodded subconsciously, pondering why he was being targeted by the two sides.

One probable reason might be that Mina's utter arrogance had enraged the three students from the Black Isotta. And the other reason might be the fact that Glenn's involvement seemed to have broken some rules.

Kyrie sneered as he twisted his body, and the next second he had disappeared. He then reappeared in the air and joined the battle. Energy waves caused by the roaring flames from their battle dispersed rampantly and intensely. This mighty power impressed not only Glenn, who was totally shocked, but also the surviving sorcerer students nearby, who hadn't given up on the mysterious site and were peeking from the distance. They were so frightened that they dared not to push their luck further.

After a while, the glaring lights in the sky eventually disappeared.

Mina had lost. She threatened in her resentment before she slipped away like a shooting star. "Black Isotta. This is not

finished!" So much hatred in her voice could be heard that no one would doubt her coming back for revenge in the future.

Kyrie motioned to Glenn, who then whisked out his magical stick Blood Bat Kiss and rode his wind element bat to the sky, and began to chase Mina with Sam, Kyrie and Bionna. They were so fast they looked like four beams of lights in different colors.

Bionna laughed with her seemingly innocent face. "Dear Mina, we were afraid that beating you wouldn't leave you an impression deep enough. So, this time, even though we've taken your award, we're gonna hunt you down till this trial ends. I wonder, after this wonderful chasing, would you still be convinced that you're the best and dare continue to look down on Black Isotta?!"

Mina made no reply and just kept on flying.

But her silence was accompanied by an obvious, intense hatred. And she even risked her life by slowing down to kill some innocent students from the Black Isotta at the cost of some minor injuries.

In the sky, the powerful magical waves caused by Mina spread three or four hundred meters away in radius, and thus attracted everyone's attention.

More shocking was the fact that the Daughter of Sun, whose magical marks equalled the sum of a hundred people's, was being chased by four Desperators, and was scuttling in such a panic.

Sitting on the wind element bat, Glenn's golden hair rustled as he watched the arrogant Mina through his Ashen mask, becoming excitedly satisfied.

He recalled the time when he saw Mina running after Bionna, and then when Sam, Kyrie and Bionna hunting her. At that time, like the countless other students, he had watched them in awe and fear, and also longed to be one of them.

Now he had become one! He was now being admired by those students who hid themselves somewhere beneath his feet.! This

was indeed thrilling!

Never had he longed so for more power—for so long he had been trying to gain sorcery power as a result of experiencing the cruel rules of Black Isotta, but now, he wanted more power because of his desire to control.

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At a camp far away on the ground, Lafite changed her eye to the Eagle Eye. She uttered a sigh as she looked at the five Desperators flying fast in the distant sky. But when she found out who the person was on that wind element bat, she was completely shocked.

After the five Desperators were gone, Chris and the others gathered around her and asked with curiosity: "Lafite, what the hell is going on there?"

"It's four...Desperators chasing the Daughter of Sun." Lafite said unwillingly. She then left without telling them that Glenn was in the formation.

Chris and the others didn't think too much about it, mistaking her strangeness as being depressed at realizing the Desperators' power was far beyond her reach. After her leaving, they kept speculating what on earth was going on in the mysterious land.

A day later.

Suddenly a powerful magical wave poured down from the air at Armbid and Belle. They went into great shock as they looked up. Scorching flames fell in the next second. Armbid yelled to Belle in fear: "Watch out!"

In the meantime, several mysterious golden lines appeared on Armbid's body and the sword in his hand made a banging noise beginning to give out crackling electric sparks.

The ease in his face gone, Armbid, in his desperation, brandished his sword at the falling flame with all his might.

"Armbid!"

Belle shouted at him and almost immediately incanted a spell, summoning a gigantic turtle with a quake of the earth. The turtle was five meters wide and had a shell of sorcery solidified granite, which glowed in a cold blaze and appeared impregnable.

Boom!

A huge explosion followed.

Armbid and Belle survived the explosion by hiding under the earth element turtle. Nevertheless, the turtle's granite shell was mostly blasted away and a small part of it turned back into soil. If someone observed it from a distance, it would look like an ugly turtle without a shell protecting its masters faithfully.

"Survived?" Mina grimaced, but she dared not to dawdle and kept flying.

In a wheezing sound, the four Desperators with mighty magical waves flew over. They glanced down with amazement at Armbid and Belle under the cover of the turtle as they continued with the chasing.

Sam smiled out of politeness at Armbid as he had joined the Death Sail League.

"Sam, Kyrie, Bionna and... Glenn!?" Armbid couldn't believe his eyes.

There was no wonder why Armbid was surprised. Even though Glenn had 30 magical marks, he had thought those were taken by some good fortune, and that he was as competent as Glenn. It never occurred to him that Glenn could be one of the Desperators, and yet...

Armbid clenched his fists tightly seeing this. Glenn showed a sneering face, laughing at him for having been so arrogant and ignorant.

Belle was also astonished, eyes widely opened. She then murmured: "G...Glenn?" She rubbed her eyes to make sure she wasn't in a dream.

It was him, the one in the Ashen mask and the one she met in the second mirror drop site a few days ago.

"No wonder that sharp-tongued lady has feelings about him. How powerful he is now! Is he some unknown genius in our school?" Belle gazed at him with curiosity.

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It was not until the five Desperators had almost spent three days circling around the field that Sam asked his partners to stop the chase. During the chase, the four of them had been using magic stones to fully recharge.

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"Sam, it'd be shameful for her to claim being the best student after this farce." Bionna had gotten totally satisfied and became like an innocent angel again.

At present, Glenn was holding a test tube which contained blood samples collected from Mina during the pursuit. He shook the tube continuously with curiosity and could feel a mild change in the surrounding temperature.

"What is the blood for?" Kyrie looked at Glenn with amazement, asking a question Sam and Bionna were also wondering about.

"Are you gonna curse her with the personal information in her blood?" Bionna guessed. "But...it's hardly possible for a sorcerer student to kill someone as powerful as her with merely a curse. And for those special curses that might work, an altar and more individual information will be needed, and it has to be a student talented in this field. "

"No...I just wanna find out why she could control the fire element with such ease, and I'm doing it with her blood. As you've seen,

she had found a way to research into your talents."

Glenn made a speculation from knowledge learnt from Mina that Bionna's golden eye was supposed to be a profound utilization of some rare water sign. And Bionna's attack properties could testify to this assumption—enemies attacked by her golden eye would all die of dehydration and eventually became mummies.

This reminded Glenn of his two twigs. If he could uncover the secrets lying inside of them, and combined them into his magical matrix, then his sorcery would at least improve by a level and become as competent as Bionna.

As for Sam's gift, Mina had said it was from his symbiosis with a monster, which baffled Glenn's comprehension, because he could think of no monster as being so powerful as to enable Sam to be physically immortal.

But if Glenn had seen Sam die once, he would not have been so confused.

Chapter 48: New Owner of the Prize

The other three Desperators had waited so long before Sam, Kyrie, Bionna and Glenn came back to the mirror site. On seeing Glenn, two of them even flew straight towards him.

"Why didn't these people enter into this mirror place by themselves?" Glenn thought curiously.

"You must be Ashen Mask Glenn Victor mentioned. How amazing it is that you survived Mina's Blushed Flame."

Hearing such a seductively charming voice, Glenn tracked and found a lady in a red-and-green dress embroidered with numerous red scorpions, and her leg was showing.

What's more alluring was a spot of mysterious, golden light in her cleavage. Though she was wearing an inviolable expression, her eyes were inviting.

All of the other beauties in the world would all be cast into shade by her.

Through Sam, Glenn learned that her name was Claytia. She was a sorcerer student who had been digging into mental strength, curse and soul sorceries. And her symbiotic insect was of a rare species born for war.

"Call me Glenn," said he coldly.

Facing Glenn, Claytia responded by biting her finger in a sexually temptingly manner, yet received no response from him. She became a little bit of unhappy and complained in a flirting way. "You're not a romantic guy."

The HalfRobot Victor snorted: "You finally come. I'm not satisfied with the way how you get into this though."

Glenn didn't reply. Rather, he looked down at the totem pillar, on the top of which the lazy Ghost Burglar was perching.

Ghost Burglar munched a bite of the red fruit in his hand and said casually: "Don't look at me like that. I was led. I'm not interested in you at all. What I wanted was the reward my mentor has left for me inside of this house. "

"Reward? What's reward?" Glenn was a little shocked.

"Enough with talk. Let's get ready for getting into this house and end this trial asap," said Sam. He then turned to Glenn. "Two things are required to open it. One is seven students with over 30 chain marks are gathered here. The other is that these seven pupils keep transferring magic force into the totem pillars for three consecutive hours without any interruption."

The Ghost Burglar added: "if it were not for the second requirement, we wouldn't have killed those students who were exploring this place. In fact, the reward will be withheld once we got over 100 marks It's the school's rule."

Glenn grimaced.

It seemed obvious now. This so-called freshman trial was in fact prepared for Desperators. The fact that they were informed of so much exclusive information was a solid evidence.

On hearing this, Glenn became envied. "The prizes in the house were just the mentors' gifts for them? But, since Mina couldn't be here, then the winner of her prize might be someone else."

Glenn took off and fell on the pillar which belonged to Mina. He then pulled out a magic stone and held it in one hand while using the other hand to inject magic force into the column.

No interruption occurred in this process. No students had the gut to challenge the Desperators after so many of them had been slain by them. As for Mina, despite that she incurred great shame, yet her injury was too serious for her to strike an intrusion.

Three hours later, Glenn felt a bursting of a strong force in the pillar beneath him and suddenly he had been transmitted to a new,

strange space.

Looking around the grey sky, Glenn got astonished for not feeling any element energy.

"Where are we?"

"It's a wormhole discovered by the Umbra School. It's been solidified by the sorcerers and now become a treasure trove or something." Sam answered without turning his head from observing a grey, ancient roll on a desk, which was not far from Glenn.

"Don't loiter around. Stepped out of the bounds and you'll be punished." Bionna reminded him kindly from the other side, who was holding a test tube of blue blood in excitement.

Glenn stared around and found that hinged on a stone desk, there was an area of physical field in a radius of 100 meters which was emitting blue lights. And things beyond the field were visually unclear.

Laying his eyes on the other Desperators, Glenn noticed that they were all thrilled and was studying the reward in their hand. He went into excitement and couldn't stop but stare at the desk before him and wondered what prize Mina's mentor would give..

"It's a crystal ball. There seems to be nothing special." Glenn frowned.

However, as he picked it up, he felt a strange energy wave. Pondering a while, he realized something and got totally shocked. "It's impossible..." His voice trembled.

In fact, a crystal ball, no matter how topnotch it was, would be worth a mere hundred magic stones at most. It shouldn't be a prize in this mirror place.

"So, what makes it special then?"

As Glenn spent more time on it, he found some familiar waves.

They were waves of enclosed souls!

"Split souls?"

Sorcerers could split souls for sure, and this sorcery served as a prerequisite for developing soul slaves. However, for a sorcerer under fourth level, no matter how talented he was at this trickery, the number of split souls would be limited.

In other words, split souls were rare and carried some knowledge and skill from the sorcerer who committed it.

"This was indeed a suitable prize for that powerful Daughter of Sun."

Without any hesitation, Glenn began to combine his soul with the ones in the crystal ball. As the souls were blended, the souls' information was transferring to Glenn's soul.

"This was an ancient way of knowledge pass-on. Through souls!"

An hour later, Glenn had gained one tenth of the knowledge from these souls. It was a fulfilling experience and he had gotten tired. He then paused the transfer, and murmured in an exhilaration. "It was a rare fire element which can't be put out."

During the process, none of the seven Desperators ever left from their stone desks.

On one hand, they were immersed in their careful study of their own precious prize. On the other hand, any one of them made a move on the others, then there would be a dogfight among them immediately.

This was in fact the final test for these Desperators—If anyone was able to beat the other six, then he or she could own all the heritage treasures here in the house!

However, no one had the capability to achieve that. So, everyone just stayed in front of their desk and focused on their own share. And of course Glenn was more than happy with this fact given the

fact that he was the weakest.

Ten days later.

Glenn was thrown into a woods with dried trees in the perimeter of the trial site following a distortion of space.

He felt a little dizzy and then he shook his head and looked around in amazement.

"What is this place? The trail should have been finished. It's been ten days in this field." Glenn guessed that he was in somewhere in the Bramble Forest where no one was around. .

Suddenly Glenn grimaced. He had sensed danger.

Six mental force waves were locking him by squeezing the natural energy around to enclose him. It seemed that if he moved around, there would be severe consequences. It was like sending some message or a warning.

Glenn couldn't figure out why he was being targeted and by whom.

"Sorcerers from the six sorcerer schools in the 12th section?" A moment later, Glenn thought.

Chapter 49: Interrogation

This was a secluded room. Fire torches were inserted on the walls for the purpose of illumination, taking the place of the usual magic-lit bulbs. Twelve adults were watching over the man sitting on the chair in the center of the room. It was Glenn. He had just woken up from a faint and had no idea what was going on.

Glenn's attempt to rise up was foiled, as were his efforts to reach his hands towards his Ashen Mask on the table in front of him. Everything around him seemed peculiar—the six men looking at him in studying manners, the torches and whatever was restraining his freedom to move. And there was a new crystal ball lying beside his Mask.

"Save your strength! You're being enclosed by the [Star of David](#). Now be attentive and got ready to answer our questions," a man from the pack of serious-looking adults uttered.

Glenn's hands trembled, and in a low and humble voice, he asked, "What's this place, please? And who are you?"

"It's sorcerers you are looking at! This is the inquiry room for interrogating bad sorcerers. You're lucky to have this," that man returned.

"Uh..." Glenn murmured.

"Who's your mentor?" A curt inquiry was the man's response. It was said in an unemotional way.

"No mentor. I don't have one." Being asked to confess something that was not the truth, especially by a sorcerer, Glenn couldn't even put the words together.

"No mentor?!" Another sorcerer took a big step towards Glenn and barked.

A chill went through Glenn's veins.

"Real—ly not—" Glenn had been thrown into the verge of a breakdown. He tried to recede but couldn't since he was still confined.

"Sources in Black Isotta tell me that no mentor has kept him as a student."

Glenn had not expected that someone would put in good words for him; he raised his head, intending to have a quick glance at the helper.

'No way—! The black cat? The cat that guards the fancy microscope I bought from Varo's mentor?! What's a cat doing here?' Glenn wondered in his head. The next moment, he lowered his head again, still thinking about it.

"Sources? What sources? Aren't you trifling with sorcerers' wisdom? Without a sorcerer, please tell me the slightest possible way that a student can get so advanced a Magical Tool!" The sorcerer who had made the first inquiry seemed to have been infuriated, and he slapped his hand on Glenn's Mask, which then vibrated and rung.

It was the Ashen Mask that the sorcerer was referring to by saying "so advanced a Magical Tool".

Meanwhile, something in the crystal ball moved.

The cat stopped talking.

"I bought it in the Black Tower; It was from a sorcerer who lives in that Tower."

"Sorcerer who?"

"I don't know his name."

"A he?"

"Yeah, a he."

"How did you have that much money to buy this mask?"

"I—I just have it. I—" In a climate that intense, Glenn could barely recall how he made his fortune.

"Your mentor gave it to you, isn't it?"

"Please—Give me a break!"

"No matter who your mentor is, you won't come out of this intact. A mentor will be held accountable for breaking the rules. He or she is not allowed to give students such a high-class Magical Tool or so many magic stones," the sorcerer threatened, ignoring Glenn's pleas. "Now a leniency will be considered if you tell us everything."

Glenn stood there, like a petrified man. He couldn't think of anything to reply and to justify himself.

"You know, if you continue to ignore our kind suggestions, you will be treated with the Soul Search."

"Soul Search?" Glenn did not have the slightest idea of what that represented, but he still shuddered.

The Soul Search was an examination of one's soul. The main part of the search was targeted on the subject's memory. The search taker would undergo extreme pain and might die from it.

The sorcerer stuck out his hand, and rotated it before Glenn's face, saying, "Now is the last chance to salvage yourself, state who your mentor is!"

"Take it easy, Inextinguishable Flame. We understand your loss and we're sorry for it, but he's just a boy. Let's cut him some slack," another sorcerer, on whose shoulder that cat was perched on, cut in.

Things started become clear in Glenn's head after he caught the word "loss".

Days prior to the interrogation, when Glenn was rescued by the three Desperaters from the Black Isotta, he allied with them in

concerted efforts against the Daughter of Sun, after Bionna's waterspout proved to be ineffective against the Daughter's Flame.

The source of Inextinguishable Flame's hostility stemmed from the humiliating failure of Daughter of Sun in the test. She was one of his favored students, and Glenn played the biggest part in her downfall. The three Desperaters avoided being thrown off the track in chasing her thanks to Glenn, who echo-located her real time coordinates. In the decisive battle, Glenn detonated the Bead that he had obtained in the second mirror site. The Daughter of Sun was pushed to the ground by the formidable force the bead created and surrendered under their siege. Thus, the great daughter, who was universally expected to be the one winning the biggest award, was kicked out of the game.

"No slack is saved for a liar!" the Flame thundered.

Glenn had recovered his reason as well as his confidence.

"I created the Love Vial. I cooked it. That's why I have the money!"

"The Love Vial?! This boy concocted that magical liquid? That's unbelievable!" The sorcerers in the interrogation room buzzed.

"And it was Dickens. Dickens sold them for me in the Black Tower." Glenn became excited as if he had been saved from hell. "And we signed the Seven Ring Contract of Partnership!"

The evidence was ironclad!

In about an hour, the twelve sorcerers came back with three new face—Dickens, Kyrie and Daughter of Sun.

The Contract was presented, and Dickens testified for Glenn. The Flame couldn't do anything but release him. Before Glenn went, he had to be recorded for everything related to the making of the Love Vial. So Glenn briefed all he had experienced, from how he got the Olfactory book back in Bi Seer City, how he was inspired by the sorcerer's quote "with my knowledge, give me a fulcrum on which

to place it, and I shall move the world!", and how he borrowed the microscope, among other incredible adventures.

The Daughter of Sun listened with keen interest. Her hatred against Glenn somehow subsided and was then replaced by admiration. She felt for Glenn's unfavorable conditions—how he had to live with as an orphan, how he had made it to the school and how he had stuck to his own way of learning. She thought she had fallen in love with Glenn in these ten minutes.

The sorcerers left, and all of Glenn's belongings were given back to him, including his new crystal ball.

Star of David is a six-pointed figure consisting of two interlaced equilateral triangles, used as a Jewish and Israeli symbol.

Chapter 50: Sorcerer Norris

Days prior to the interrogation, the Test was still marching on in the Bremble Forest.

That night, Glenn slipped out of his tent and left Lafite with the Bead. His mind was bent on the third mirror parachute and the Desperaters.

Glenn's thoughts and actions had not escaped Lafite's observing eyes, and it seemed to her that the scale in Glenn's heart was tilting to gaining power rather than caring for her. Yet, she withheld from intervening. She was assured that love, if taken or maintained through violence, wouldn't endure.

"Would he choose power over me when the day came?" Lafite forced a smile.

Things that followed had been set forth in previous chapters. When Daughter of Sun was edged out of the vying for the third mirror bounty, Glenn filled in her position.

The key to opening up the mirror house was to enliven the house by a constant transfer of magical force towards the seven pillars bolstering the house. The magical force provider had to have a 30 point energy or more chain mark for the magical force to be effective. And there was a constraint—the magical force must be pumping to the pillars for at least three hourglasses.

Daughter of Sun and the HalfRobot had been deterred by Glenn's existence after the HalfRobot had sustained his fiasco with Glenn. The prospect of a stealth attack had fazed these two Desperaters. So they wanted Glenn dead dearly and intended to terminate him at all costs, but it came to nothing owing to the Black Isotta Desperaters' assistance and Glenn's growing capabilities.

Now the only student who could pose any real threat to unlocking the house had been cleared. The new seven

“Desperaters” were going to collude in something great.

The magical force commenced transmitting.

Immediately, the surrounding was immersed in noises one would hear when a flame was doused by icy water. And seven beams of dark blue light were seen hitting on the pillars.

Glenn clung to the intermediate stone in his hand to replenish the consumed magical force; one hourglass later, his forehead had begun to show beads of sweat.

Students around the house were overlooking from the elevated spots. They were disinclined to take a step forward since they considered it suicide.

Another hourglass elapsed. The inscriptions on these pillars moved a little after receiving the energy.

The final minutes came. Glenn had been drenched in his sweat, and the last intermediate magical stone had lost its luster and died out after giving out its last magical force. The other Desperaters were worn out too and were pitching in their best effort.

Eventually, the door opened, and the seven of them was pulled into the house. The door was then shut.

The air within the house was gray, as if it was veiled.

“Finally, we’re here!” The Ghost Burglar made a sinister grin.

“Where are we?” Glenn sneaked a question quietly to Sam, who was on his side.

“This is a cubic of space, and the sorcerers out there sealed it. They then stashed treasures in here!” Sam returned in the same muffled voice.

‘Why do they know everything! How did they know the way to open the house?’ Glenn thought, suspecting that the whole test was laid out in favour of the Desperaters by giving them inside information.

The six Desperaters walked to the tables which, surprisingly, had their names on it. Glenn got to the last table, the name tag of which read:

“For Daughter of Sun.”

“No kidding! The whole test had been pre-arranged! The lot of innocent students were slaughtered to pave their way to power? I can’t believe this!” Glenn’s suspicion had been confirmed.

The next second, Glenn returned to his senses and concentrated his attention on the little gadget before him.

“A crystal ball? That’s it?” Glenn went into dismay.

But soon Glenn’s frustration diminished as he observed something flowing inside the ball.

“Oh my! They’re split souls!” Glenn almost yelled.

One’s soul could only be spilt by sorcerers, and before reaching level four, a sorcerer could separate souls for a very limited amount. One thing that mustn’t be left unmentioned was that soul-splitting was the very foundation of raising soul slaves.

“The schools were really into this Daughter of Sun! These are a bunch of soul fragments.” Glenn murmured.

Glenn inclined his head and touched the crystal ball with his temple. Snippets of the souls’ information started passing on to Glenn’s brain.

An hourglass later, Glenn had absorbed a tenth of the soul’s information, which made him weary. Yet he had made a discovery.

“There’s a rare fire element!” Glenn gazed.

As illustrated before, the Element Matrix could boost the cultivator’s mental strength, which roughly determined his/her magical force. The Matrix was the set of the permutations of the 26 symbols and signs (the elements) recorded in sorcery books.

When the elements combined, they would be connected and thus

would produce power one couldn't imagine. Apart from the current 26 regular elements, further ones were being tapped in nature or being explored in the lab.

Now, Glenn had obtained one rare element!

As Glenn leaned his head and tried to extract more information from these souls, his head was suddenly sucked onto the crystal ball as if it was pulled to it by a magnet.

Glenn screamed for help. But as Sam, Bionna and Kyrie were reaching to separate his head off the ball, Glenn's body twisted and he then disappeared.

Sam, Bionna and Kyrie were dismayed. The Ghost Burglar and the HalfRobot smiled a private grin.

Glenn woke up and found himself in that cold chair of that cold room, being watched by a bunch of sorcerers' grim eyes. Luckily, he was acquitted of charge by the twelve sorcerers.

Glenn was offered a red metamorphic rock by the Inextinguishable Flame as a compensation.

Better, as the sorcerers had left after the interrogation ended, the door was suddenly swung open. It was the cat.

"Glenn, would you like to take Sorcerer Norris as your mentor and follow his order willingly until your life ends?" the cat spoke.

"You're Sorcerer Norris?" Glenn couldn't help but ridicule.

"No! I'm not Sorcerer Norris! He is."

As the cat's voice faded, a cloaked man came in.

"Glenn, I am Sorcerer Norris! Will you be my apprentice?"

Chapter 51: Promotion

"I'm more than willing to!" Glenn opened his eyes wide.

"Good. Then you'll be my third apprentice. The guy Varro is the second student I've accepted and before him, I have Deep Spring." Sorcerer Norris's face looked heavy as he mentioned Deep Spring. "She's a good student, but she's alway on business and doesn't stay here."

Glenn rose up, approached Sorcerer Norris and bowed to him in the most respectful manner.

"Master." Glenn didn't want to run the risk of being dismissed by saying a redundant word.

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The famous First-Year Student Sorcery Test had come to a conclusion. Glenn was reclining leisurely on his bed in his dormitory. It was a luxury which he had been deprived of for 30 days.

"I finally have a future— a decent future! I've a mentor who's a sorcerer!" Glenn reinforced his grip on a random book in his hand. His eyes were determined.

Soon, Glenn jumped out of bed and was eager to experiment with the new samples he had collected during the test.

The first thing was that rare fire element, and the mission confronting him was how to cure it into his Element Matrix. If he succeeded, there would be a significant rise in his mental strength.

The second thing concerned Daughter of Sun's blood sample. Glenn had viald her blood stains left in the dirt, which she shed when she was knocked down to the ground by the exploding bead. As a big figure from the Black Isotta and a potential sorcerer whose name was ironed out in the third mirror house's reward table, there must be something worthy of meticulous research in her

blood.

The third was about the hallucinogenic substance carried in the mushroom's spores, which almost caused him faint before the first mirror was dropped in the forest. The Symbiotic Insects he had raised had buzzed in his ears and saved him. Now Glenn had a strong desire to deepen his relationship with the Symbiotic Insects.

Glenn put the Daughter of Sun's blood sample and mushroom fragments into separate Petri dishes and kept them in a sub zero temperature environment.

Afterwards, he returned back to the bed and held his new crystal ball in hand. He watched it earnestly as if it was his baby who he was taking care of.

Suddenly there was a round of sharp knocks on his door.

"It's midnight. Who would come to me at this time?" Glenn frowned, and quietly put aside his ball on his pillow's side.

Without much thinking, Glenn answered the door. What he would meet with was dislike, blame and even curses.

"Where the hell have you been? The test has been over for two days, and you're still not coming to me?" It was Lafite who, with a long face, roared out a series of questions.

"I was gonna..." Glen tried to make an explanation.

"Why did you leave us? Why did you take the Bead? You left the whole group in danger, don't you know that?" Lafite stepped up the offensive.

During the quarrel, Glenn was being pushed backwards until he reached the window and hit his head on it.

"Ah!" Glenn let off a cry.

Lafite's gloomy face turned into a loving one.

"Are you okay?" Lafite asked lightly.

"Come on. I'm fine. I'm Sorcerer Norris's student; I will always be fine." Glenn boated.

Lafite returned by pouting her mouth, and she made a suggestion, "It's a huge thing! So what do you say we celebrate it?"

"Celebrate? Like how?"

"Like doing it!"

That night, without having to worry about their life being taken, both of them sunk in sexual intimacy.

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The next day's night, the Death Sail League called up a meeting.

In the meeting hall, Glenn was sitting next to Lafite, silently. He had been used to concealing his brilliance. Robinson was stepping to and fro before Glenn, laying grievances against what a hell he had been through. But Glenn paid little attention.

It was said that 5 of the 13 Superiors (including Sam) of the League died in the Test, and the league members had diminished to under 200. Along with the Death Sail League, there were five other major leagues in the Black Isotta.

The Gory Test had decimated the young students in large numbers. The leagues were invariably shorthanded and were in urgent need of new recruits. And to appeal to the non-affiliated students to join, it called for charismatic leaders. That was the reason why the Death Sail League convened this meeting. And words were in the air that Kyrie, Bionna and Sam were on the hit list of the five other leagues; the exact reasons were yet known.

Alastair, founder of the Sail League, was giving a speech to interpret his vision regarding the growth plans against this new background, and he concluded his speech by saying:

"After giving much thought to it, the League has decided that the new Superiors will be Glenn and Belle!"

Glenn was thrown into a daze by his words. Lafite turned to Glenn and gave him a puzzled look.

The audience were bewildered as well. Most of them yelled for Glenn as he was well-known now. Yet they booed Alastair's decision to elevate Belle as a Superior because she was rarely known as a "brilliant" student. She had turned down Alastair's love, yet retained the clinging fibers that linked them up.

Belle was happy about the decision. But Glenn was not quite.

"Glenn, congratulations!" Alastair stepped down the stage and came to Glenn.

Glenn turned to Lafite and begged her as if she was the decider. "I don't wanna be a Superior. I wanna be left alone to learn sorcery."

Lafite looked into Glenn's eyes and saw that they were filled with resolution.

"No, Alastair. Glenn can't take the position. He has personal stuff to deal with."

Alastair displayed a terrified countenance on his face. The day before, he was defeated by a leader from another league.

"Lafite, the League need more strong leaders to take us further. Time is different!"

"The answer is still no! Glenn is busy. He's not suitable for such a position!" The sharp-tongued queen persisted unreasonably.

"The League is in peril. We need him."

"I need him, too."

...

Unable to persuade her, Alastair gave up and dropped the request.

Chapter 52: Passive Evolution

Lafite's insistence against Alastair's request saved Glenn from being involved in the minute trivialities in managing a league. Glenn craved for getting his fill out of sorcery learning. This thirst was becoming stronger since he was accepted as a disciple by Sorcerer Norris.

After the gathering ended, Glenn escorted Lafite to her dorm and headed off to the Black Tower. He needed to get prepared before his appointment with his mentor a few days later.

"Glenn!"

Glenn stopped when he heard someone call his name.

It was Chris, and he had a girl with him.

"Oh, It's you." Glenn smiled to the girl gently.

The girl was flat-chested, and she had neither a pretty face nor fair complexion. But she seemed mature and walked with a calm gait.

Before the girl said anything, Chris patted Glenn on the back of his arm and explained:

"Glenn. Her name is Olivia. I bet you must know her. She wanted to thank you in person for saving her life."

Olivia was the girl whom Glenn met before he tried to enter the mirror house. Olivia had run to him for help in the dogfight of the students who were wrestling for the gifts. Glenn had lent a hand and saved her from being slaughtered in that brutal scuffle. What she failed to realize was that offering her a hand was a trap for capturing the boy who was pursuing her! Glenn was deliberately keeping still while waiting for Olivia to approach him because he was containing his powerful chain mark to not to scare off the boy.

"Glenn, thanks!" Olivia moved her lips. One could observe in her

eyes the depth of her gratitude towards Glenn.

"We're school fellas! I felt obligated in so doing." Glenn said it out of courtesy. Rescuing her was not his intention for one thing, and for another, he was confused about why Chris was in company with Olivia.

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Glenn bid farewell to the pair and sped off to the Black Tower.

Dickens welcomed Glenn with his bright smile and his usual ardent and affected grin. Yet the next second, his face fell.

"Glenn, you've freaked the sh\*t out of me. I heard you had been in that damn interrogation room. That was madness. How could they treat a student like that? Are you all right now?"

Glenn shrugged but made no comments.

"So what can I get for you? What do you need for your experiments?" Delight was resumed on Dickens' face.

"I want something that can make me and my Gadflies — the Symbiotic Insect of mine

— link up stronger. Do you have something that have such effect?"

"Concord Grass will do, I think!" Dickens hunted through a small black case and yelled seconds later, "found it!"

Dickens passed the Grass to Glenn and stated, "About the microscope you asked — a Sorcerer promised to give it to me within two months."

Glenn nodded a thanks and asked for a live monkey, which was then presented to him.

As Glenn was about to leave, Dickens hollered at Glenn to wait, although his voice betrayed his hesitation.

"Glenn—" Dickens drawled.

"Oh, Silly me! I forgot to pay!" Glenn pulled out a bag of stones.

"No, it's not that. I got something somewhere— it's from a place way way off." Dickens faltered. "And actually, I'm not licensed to sell."

"What is it?" Dickens' wavering gesture roused Glenn's interest.

"Okay, wait a sec."

Dickens dragged a transparent box. Inside it were a dark ball and a crown-shaped Magical Tool. He then put them over the counter.

"This is a crystal ball for sorcerers that inhabit the Underground World." Dickens introduced.

Upon hearing "Underground World", Sorcerer Apollo's image came to Glenn's head. Apollo was the one who opened up Glenn's mind to sorcery! But ever since Apollo left the young students in Sorcerer Dior's hands at the Seer port and headed for the Underground World, Glenn had never had a chance to see or hear from him.

"Sorcerers here exploited elements along the path of sorcery learning. But for sorcerers on the Underground World, they used dragons to hone theirs, and the dragons had proved to be very practical weapons in the second Civilization War, which involved us and them."

"The Second Civilization War? Like an actual war between sorcerers?" Dickens' words beamed up Glenn's face, which signified his astonishment and curiosity.

Glenn had read from books that sorcerers on the Sorcerers Continent were not alone. They ran parallel to several other realms beyond this Continent, including the Underground World. But never had he hear it from a real person, not to mention a sorcerer war.

"Yeah, It's a war that came with heavy casualties. A lot of sorcerers died in that war."

"Did we win?"

"No, we lost!"

"Ah!" Glenn seemed hardly to believe that the Sorcerers Continent would be defeated, which he had unbreakable faith in. "How did we survive the war, then? Were the Underground sorcerers our enemy back then?"

"We just survived. That's all I know." Dickens appeared to have lost his clear-headedness in pitching his product as a salesman after mentioning the war. He sunk into his chair and looked into the crystal ball.

Catching sight of Dickens' careworn face, Glenn started asking about the crystal ball, trying to veer his focus away from that civilization war.

"So, what's the difference between our crystal ball and theirs? Is there anything special about it?"

"Theirs also indicates body constitution. That's the difference. Constitution matters in their sorcery learning mechanism since they command dragons to do things for them."

That being said, Dickens relapsed into his muddle-headedness.

Glenn reached out his hand and touched the crystal ball without hesitation.

The readings ran as follows:

"Mental Strength: 24 points;

Magical Force: 238~247 points;

Constitution: 4 points;

Stamina: 34~55 points;

Strength: 15~60 points;

Resilience: 22~24 points"

"This sucks! I only have a 4 point constitution?! That's an insult!"

Glenn was dispirited.

"Yeah, 4 points is frustrating. And accordingly, your stamina, strength and resilience are a low grade, too. But these three are attributes of one's constitution. So they're directly connected, like our mental strength and magical force are correlated positively." Dickens went on to talk about the price. "I'm breaking school rules to sell this, so it's priced at 10,000 magical stones."

Glenn was in no short supply of stones. Dickens was killing with the aphrodisiac industry in the Black Isotta and more with the Love Vial designed by Glenn. He was selling more at higher prices, increasing Glenn's proceedings as the owner of the potion. Besides, Glenn had received huge rewards from killing students in the Test, and the total amount exceeded 20,000 magical stones.

"We have a deal." Glenn nodded. "Tell me about this crown thing."

"It's an amazing Magical Tool like a microscope. You can use it to examine your body—your internal organs and your circulatory system. But for this tool to act, you'll have to consume your soul power, so its use has to be sternly restricted to once a month!" warned Dickens. "Specifically, it's used when one was cursed, and the Tweeting Twig stopped the curing momentarily. This way, one can observe the interiors of his/her body to seek out why they are being cursed."

"This is such a spectacular tool!"

# Chapter 53: The Water Tower

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Glenn had three crystal balls now — the usual one, the one that contained split souls and one used in the Underground World.

Going back to his dorm, Glenn found that the mushroom seeds had grown up. He noticed some farinaceous spores on the fungi's fruiting body and collected them with meticulous care.

"These stuff hallucinated me and almost got me killed in the forest!" Glenn murmured unintelligibly as he put the spores into a flask.

There was another flask with a ginger, turbid liquid in it. The liquid was an extraction from the stomach of a crane on which Glenn had tested his Gadflies three months ago. According to Glenn's long term observation and examination, this liquid was the key to the crane's resistance against the Gadflies' bad mutational effect — the one that deformed its host.

Another test result related to Gadflies was its role as a Symbiotic Insect in accelerating the host's evolutionary process, especially the process of passive evolution.

Passive evolution referred to the obtainment of new or enhanced features or faculties while one was adapting to the changing environment. One example was the shift into upright walking: calluses appeared on humans' heels to reduce the pain, and leg muscles got stronger to make it easier to walk. But passive revolution couldn't compare to positive revolution in terms of the newly gained abilities, such as when a sorcerer upgraded to a higher level.

Natural evolution took time, but Gadflies could quicken the process and bump the relevant ability to a higher pitch.

As a consequence of passive revolution, Glenn was now more immune to being hallucinated because he had been entranced once

by the mushrooms, and to being burned because he had received injuries from Daughter of Sun's flame.

A barbarous idea came into Glenn's mind when he made this discovery — to buy magical sticks of varied elements to hurt himself and thus improve his defense against them. But he was exhausted and went to bed. He fell asleep in, literally, a minute.

The next day, Glenn went to Dickens and other shops located in the trade market to purchase the magical sticks. Now he had ten sticks that were each made of distinctive element. These elements were the commonly seen ones: fire, water, ice, wood, earth, wind, thunder, light, dark, and life.

Glenn deliberately bought sticks that had offense power ranging from 20 to 30 points. By doing so, he would get around 10 point actual attack against him, because his mask would absorb 20 points offense without requiring Glenn having to consume his magical force. However, 10 point offense would readily kill a 4 point constitution body. So, Glenn followed Dicken's proposal, who, despite his serious concern over Glenn's method for a quicken evolution, gave him some Life Leaves. Life Leave, when put in the mouth, could protect one for a short time by raising one's internal energy and could be used for multiple times.

One minor side effect was that after receiving an attack from a particular element, Glenn must take a certain kind of food to make the whole approach work. Diet couldn't afford to be ignored, and it had to be the exact food.

The process went on — Element assault, being neutralized by Life Leave, Gadflies secreting special material and driving evolution speed up. Soon, Glenn had made a list of food that popped up in his head. They were produced subconsciously.

The foods were not difficult to find except for the one that came out when he was attacked by fire element. It was the Beauty Clam.

The Beauty Clam was what governor of Bi Seer city had

entertained sorcerer Apollo with at the banquet. They were said to exclusively belong to the South Frontier Sea. They were very precious and hard to find and capture. Although there was an alternative to the Clam, but he desired the best choice and took his chance.

"Hi, Lafite. It's Glenn. How are you?" Glenn made a contact with Lafite using his new black crystal ball.

"Yo! Come and see who this is! It's Glenn, someone who has never contacted me first!" Lafite sneered.

"Lafite, I'm doing a test, and I need some Beauty Clams. I remembered your father talked about where to get them. Do you remember?"

"Beauty? What kind of test require beauties?" was Lafite's reply.

"Lafite!" Glenn accentuated Lafite's name to signify to her to stop joking. "I'm in a hurry. I need to finish this test before I go meet sorcerer Norris."

"How exactly does it concern me?" Lafite proceeded in her same serious tone.

Glenn sulked and ceased talking.

"Ha!" Lafite burst into laughter. She then said, "I don't remember it. But why don't you try the 'Bounty Hunter' at the Black Tower? You put a bounty on the things you want, and someone will get it for ya."

"Yeah, good idea. I am going to do that." Now seeing some progress on the matter, Glenn was about to end the call as he noticed, through the ball, Lafite's bare shoulder and shapely bosom. So instead, he slobbered.

"I'm free tonight. Can I come to see you?"

"Why the polite formula? I'm your girl. See you soon." Lafite blew a kiss towards Glenn.



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The Black Isotta was lit by lights. Glenn was walking towards Lafite's dormitory. He walked without making any sound, without giving out any scents. He was a mystery!

Suddenly, Glenn's attention was drawn to a feminine scream.

The screech was made by a girl who just got out of a yard. She didn't see Glenn at first, and as she ran past him, her panicked eyes met Glenn's. She said nothing and left immediately.

Glen took a few steps forward to have a look into the yard. It was dilapidated and was covered in thick and tall grass. In the middle of it was a water tower. This place was one of the two forbidden areas in Robinson's eyes. Glenn had been warned by him to not develop any interest in this water tower. The reason was that it was haunted.

However, Glenn had always relied his reason on sorcery rather than supernatural beings. Saying a tower was "haunted" demonstrated his/her ignorance and even benightedness.

Glenn made some progress to the yard's gate. He then paused for some seconds and strode into it.

The yard reeked of the smell of rotten grass, which had run rampant. The moment Glenn stepped through the gate, he observed two peculiarities — the noise of the school was gone: he couldn't hear a thing, even the striking bells. And the brilliant light was gone as well.

He had entered a complete silent, dark area!

"It's so weird. If this yard is enclosed by a sorcerer and thus absorbed the sound and light, then why can't I feel any energy movement?!" Glenn wondered. "It is so strange even outside the water tower. Should I go into it?"

Chapter 54: The Water Tower II

Glenn had made his mind to explore this arcane tower.

The yard reeked of a smell of rotten grass, which had run rampant. The moment Glenn stepped through the gate, he noticed two peculiarities — the noise of the school was gone and he couldn't hear a thing, not even the striking bells; the brilliant light was gone as well.

As Glenn was hesitating on whether to enter the water tower or not, he heard a rustle of the tall grass behind him. He jerked his head about and found a pair of green eyes staring at him, which then disappeared in no time.

The strange thing about the eyes was that Glenn didn't feel their existence, neither through his mask's echolocation nor via his sharp sense of smell.

But Glenn was determined that the tower was just under the control of some fancy sorcery instead of being haunted. So he walked towards it. The sound of his footprints echoed the noise produced when the grass was stamped down.

Again, Glenn could feel that he was being watched by the green eyes by using his peripheral vision. He ignored it and arrived before the tower.

The tower showed signs of many years of history. Its walls had been eroded by wind and rain. There were cracks all over them, as if they had been scratched by sharp claws belonging to some type of animal.

Glenn turned his head up and saw the gray sky over the tower. A spinning swirl in the sky was covering the tower, and the tower was right in the midst of the swirl. Glenn started to suspect that there might be mystical force regulating the tower.

As Glenn took a deep breath and viewed the sky for the second

time, he noticed that the swirl had eyes, which were slit. And the swirl returned Glenn's look.

"Am I under delusion? That's not possible. If I had been hallucinating, the Gadflies would have reacted. But they've not." Glenn couldn't help but pinch his thigh to verify if his body could feel pain.

The eye contact between Glenn and the rotating swirl continued for half an hourglass. During the process, Glenn was under the impression that he was like a bug in a glass ware, which was being surveyed by a great sorcerer in his/her laboratory.

"If the one behind this was a sorcerer from our side, why wouldn't he show himself? If it was someone or something from the Underground World or somewhere else who might be unfriendly to us and who had lurked around on the Sorcerer Continent, it would have caused a sensation among us, and the great sorcerers on our side would have pursued it. The Sorcerer Continent is not a weak lamb waiting to be slaughtered. We invade others!"

Thinking about that, Glenn regained his confidence and pushed the door open. Darkness consumed Glenn. It was as if he had stepped into a monster's mouth.

The door shut itself with a creaking sound after Glenn went in.

Glenn turned around with a rush. He didn't see the green eyes that stalked him, but he noticed that wooden door, which was rotten and dilapidated. He thought: 'With another slam, that door would certainly break.' Soon, Glenn realized one interesting fact — the sound was back, and he could hear things again after stepping through.

Glenn calmed himself down but kept saying "how did this happen?".

Glenn took a step forward and kicked over a jar or something,

and a crisp voice then filled the air.

Glenn realized the necessity of illumination. He chanted something, trying to produce a flame by using fire element, but nothing happened.

"Eh? Even sorceries couldn't be pulled out here?" Glenn went nuts.

Making someone lose his sorcery was a top-notch capability. It was the absolute manipulation over natural forces. Glenn was convinced that one's sorcery could be dampened to produce much lower level of sorcery energy and power, in other words, to deny the sorcery making him unable to have bigger effectiveness through the lever and fulcrum effect. But to cause a complete failure of a sorcery? This was unrealistic.

Glenn's quest for sorcery was spurred on. He wanted to figure the whole thing out.

Glenn then fumbled around to get to the stairs. He desired to reach the tower top and have a close look at the swirl.

After stubbing his toe on a block of wood, he felt it using his hand knew that it was the stair. He lifted his right foot tentatively and landed it on the first stair. The wood squeaked, yet weirdly enough, the stair squeaked twice.

"Am I being followed? Is there someone else? I only took one step, why were there two sound out of it?" Glenn doubted.

Glenn attempted to produce a fire for illumination but failed again.

As Glenn was taking another step onto the second step, a faint moonlight came from the very dome of the tower, as if it was from the swirl itself.

Glenn took a breath of comfort, yet the next second, he found he was still on the ground floor, as if he had not taken any steps.

"Why am I still in the original point? Haven't I moved?" Glenn murmured, yet his voice echoed a long distance within the silent tower.

For the second time, Glenn thought that he had been entranced. However, the Gadflies remained inactive in his body!

"Was the time reverted back? Or was I brought back by a force too fast force to feel?" Glenn placated himself by trying to explain this odd phenomenon.

Afterwards, Glenn climbed six or seven stairs at a stretch before he stopped suddenly. The double creaking sound thing appeared again.

Glenn panted for some air while he stayed on full alert. Quietly and slowly, he turned his head, and he was ensured that there was nobody.

Glenn rushed two stories in one breath.

The same thing repeated— Glenn took one step, two creaks would be heard.

Glenn echo located using his mask but found no living thing, neither did his sense of smell. At the time, something spooky occurred: there was someone puffing into his neck. He could feel the movement of the air, which then condensed on the surface of his neck.

A sweat rolled down from Glenn's forehead.

"If I die tonight, I die for sorceries!" Glenn took a deep breath and made off at a scamper. He ran on until he had to stop for a rest.

The double echo thing finally disappeared. Glenn was thrilled as if he had broken the spell of a sorcery. Meanwhile, a weird thing happened again: the light was lost for another time. He kicked the stair and no noise was produced.

"Was the space of this tower partitioned by something? Am I

entering some deep water of something?" Glenn rested his hand on the slippery rail and pondered, "Lafite must have been anxious on not seeing me at her apartment? I have to see Sorcerer Norris tomorrow. Should I go further?"

Glenn braced himself and climbed another story. As Glenn stepped onto the middle stair, he felt as if his whole body went through a thin film. He received some resistance, but by force of inertia, he just cut through.

The moment Glenn pierced through the film, he was greeted by bright lights.

As Glenn's vision restored, he found that he was still at the very first stair — he had not moved at all.

Chapter 55: The Sorcerer Tower

"Hey, you've been stunned silent in there since I entered here ten minutes ago. Are you gonna climb up or not?"

Glenn was jolted back to reality with a start on hearing the sudden urging. His knees nearly collapsed. He then propped himself up by leaning against the rail! In his surprise, he stammered, "Who are you?"

After Glenn recovered his intelligence, he found a girl standing at the door of the tower. The next second, he noticed her blue eyes. He was sort of relieved because it was not her who had tracked him. She didn't have that pair of green eyes.

"Quick, get out of here. Don't dawdle! The weird things in this tower won't happen again once there are two or more people in here!" The girl continued her yelling.

This girl was terribly overweight. Glenn estimated that she weighed 400 kilos. That was Glenn's only impression of her. Yet the next occasion they met, Glenn would be more deeply impressed.

Glen had no intention to argue with this rude, mysterious girl. He rushed past her, got out of the water tower and the yard that surrounded it.

It was already midnight. In the moonlight, the water tower just seemed like usual — tattered yet stately erected. Glenn didn't want to tarry and went directly to the Black Tower. On the wall of the Bounty Section, he wrote: "4,000 magical stones for 100 Beauty Clams."

Before leaving the Black Tower, Glenn asked a service person about the date and time, and he was ensured that he had stayed in that water tower for about an hourglass.

After the official work, Glenn headed off to Lafite, who had been

simmering in fury, for Glenn had been late for an hourglass. Yet the anger between the couple melted when skins contacted!

The following day was when Glenn and his mentor were scheduled to meet.

Glenn went to the Black Tower and arrived at the 79th floor, where Sorcerer Norris lived. Norris, Varro and the cat were already there, awaiting Glenn's arrival. There was an adult female with them.

"Glenn, come! Today, you've been called here to learn the basic sorcery of intoxication."

Norris rattled on about the history of this sorcery. After that, he introduced the female beside him, who turned out to be his wife. The woman seemed taciturn. She hadn't spoken during Norris' 15 minute long tirade.

According to Norris, his wife was a gourmet. She excelled in cooking puffer fish.

"Glenn, this is puffer fish. We fished them for you. They are of significant medicinal value." Norris' wife smiled gently. The smile was charming. What was also enchanting was her small yet perfectly proportioned figure and her blond hair that rolled down to shoulder. Her face was enlivened with the gleam of her hair. Yet Glenn was astonished when he noticed a mouth on each of her palm.

The cat was also at the table with an apron before its chest. It made an annoying noise when swallowing its saliva produced on seeing the fish served for Glenn.

"Hey. These fish were brought here from the Foreign Land. And Norris built that large tank and raised them with great care, or they would have gone extinct." The cat said that without moving its eyes from the fish. "Today you're being served this for a good reason. You're too weak! You have a body constitution of 4 points.

But eating one fish will boost your constitution up by 3. Remember, the first fish has to be swallowed up whole in one go."

"A three point rise? Are you serious?" Glenn grunted towards the cat, which didn't answer his question.

At that time, Norris' second disciple Varro walked to Glenn and offered him an ivory dagger.

"It's a small world. I didn't expect we would be both studying under Sorcerer Norris. This is a little gadget I collected. It was made from a sorcerer's nail — a level three sorcerer!"

Glenn accepted it, and he found that the dagger was irregularly indented. He felt it using his hand and said, "It's sharp!"

"Try and use your magical strength to activate it!" Varro exclaimed.

Glenn followed Varro's suggestion. The second the magical force ran over the dagger, it caught on fire, which then glittered in a pure blue shade.

After Glenn enjoyed his fish, the group broke. Glenn followed Norris to his laboratory after a sip of coffee.

Norris had a private laboratory, which was divided into nine separate rooms. It was well-equipped for research and experiments. And there were books and scrolls recording the knowledge passed on from ancient sorceries.

However, Glenn was still thinking about the Water Tower. So, he asked: "Sorcerer Norris. May I ask a question about the Water Tower? I climbed onto it before I came here."

"Eh?" was Norris' response.

"It was so strange, so uncanny. I couldn't even believe my eyes and ears when I was in there."

"So, you have been to the Black Mirror?"

"I guess so." Glen conjectured that the thin film might be the

mirror that Norris was talking about.

"It's a forbidden place! You're not allowed to go there!" Norris' face became stern.

Glenn had never seen his mentor speak in a high pitch, which caused a slight trembling of his hands.

"You'd better behave yourself. There are rules governing the school and the Sorcerer Continent. But, since you've broken in the mirror, it won't hurt to tell you something about it." Norris' serious face softened.

"1700 years ago, a sorcerer established this school— the Black Isotta School of Sorcerers! And of course that sorcerer owned the water tower. The water tower was a reservoir of mental strength, which is enclosed in separate spaces in the water tower!" Norris continued. "The energy waves the mental strength carried are so powerful that they might temporarily block the reflections of sound and sight and thus create dark, silent, dead spaces. In a space where energy waves are not that strong, reflections will be resumed, and you can see and hear things again. Strangely enough, different spaces are constantly changing position, so a sound might be repeated, so you might be misled into believing that someone was following you."

"There's a probability for these things to happen, but there is one thing for sure. According to your description, you must have cut through the Black Mirror, and you pierced it without knowledge of its efficacy, so your mental strength will get a bump." Norris signified to Glenn to take a test of his mental strength.

Glenn took out his Black Crystal Ball, and his mental strength was measured at 29 points.

"Excellent, there's a five point rise!" If Norris was not present, Glenn would have jumped into the air and waved his arm for a celebration.

"There are essentially three qualitative changes along the road of sorcery learning. The first one is to become a sorcerer. The second metamorphosis is to become a level four sorcerer — a Stigmata sorcerer," said Norris calmly. "A Stigmata sorcerer is all-powerful. They own an army of slaves on the Foreign Land. They build it after they conquer these living beings there, and some of these armies are of over 10,000 slaves."

"The reason why they're so powerful was this!" Norris lifted his finger and headed up at the same time.

"The ceiling?" Glenn's tongue slipped. He gave an answer that made himself laugh.

"The water tower! Every Stigmata sorcerer own a sorcery school, which hinges on the sorcery tower, in our case, the Black Tower. However, the water tower is the key."

"A key to what?"

"A key to his or her power! You see, the student who accidentally intruded into the water power would very likely increase his mental strength and thus the chance of becoming a sorcerer. The Stigmata sorcerer's power grows when a student becomes a sorcerer!"

Things began to clear out. Glenn now knew that those in high power or authority wanted sorcerers! The First-years Sorcery Test had been designed to lay foundation for the Desperaters and whoever were stronger to become a sorcerer!

Glenn held back his anger and asked Norris about the level seven sorcerers — the Necromancy Sorcerers.

"The Necromancy Sorcerers? You keep in mind one thing about them. You would be killed by their energy waves if you approached them. So, never do that. They live in the Holy Rings. That's why they're off bounds."

Chapter 56: Lymph

That night, Norris started the official teaching of sorcery — Intoxication Sorcery.

"Before learning the sorcery of intoxication, there is one thing you need to keep in mind: We keep trying to improve our mental strength through the power of elements. Then we utilize the principle of "lever and fulcrum" to produce the most formidable offense power. Different from us, sorcerers in the Underground World use a way related to dragon taming in advancing their sorceries, and intoxication originates from dragon taming." Norris smiled.

Norris then continued, "Do you know how toxic substances are categorized?"

Pondering on the question for a moment, Glenn gathered his courage and answered:

"I think there might be three types: toxins produced by animals, by plants and toxins linked to metals."

"Uh...that's a very generic classification. Sorceries related to toxins are complex and hard to master. And the first thing to be not accidentally killed by your toxins is to remember how they are classified," warned Sorcerer Norris.

Glenn nodded heavily to demonstrate his consent.

Norris walked to a counter, took out a scroll and spread it out on the table.

It seemed that the scroll might have had a long history, for it had a light green shade. but it was not deformed at all — it neither crumbled nor frayed.

"Look at how this book recorded the categories of toxins." Norris moved his head slightly, signifying Glenn to come closer.

Glenn had great trouble in discerning the words on the scroll, because the words on the Sorcerer Continent differed a little bit from humans', and they were written in ancient words. Therefore, it took Glenn a long time to recognize them. After he finished reading, Glenn said in a surprise, "They were divided according to toxic reactions?"

According to the scroll, the sorcerer who made this scroll divided all the poisons he once dealt with into seven categories.

Category one was blood-poisoning. Drugs of this kind damaged the blood circulatory system; for example, congealing the blood in living organisms.

Category two were neurotoxic drugs. They could hold up or completely block neural response of living organisms.

Category three was about detoxification. This sort of toxin was able to vitiate the detox system and thus cause the operation of the vital organs to malfunction.

Category four was about necrotic substances. They could acidify the cells in a living body to a degree that they would die.

In addition to these four commonly seen toxins, there were another two kind of poisons recorded in the scroll, which were said to only exist in a few sorcerer worlds.

One was radioactive matter. They intoxicated the nearby living organisms by giving off rays and thus resulting in a complete failure of cellular metabolism. Its origin would surprise all who had no knowledge of it. This magical poison was produced by a kind of rare stone in nature, which was named as the Radioactive Stone by the sorcerer who documented this scroll.

The other scarce toxin was parasites. They were too tiny to be visible to human eyes and thus could only be observed through microscopes. These parasites lived on cell walls. They were highly adaptive to the changing environment within the host's body. And

they would, by feeding on the host's nutrients and energy, multiply and proliferate until the cells couldn't afford them. As a windfall, a membrane would form on the cell walls because of this, which would protect the cells from other damage.

The scroll also introduced a sort of intoxication method that belonged to no kind. That the target would be poisoned just by being stared at for some time was one. Such strange ways of getting people poisoned included producing a sound or controlling the target's mind. Sight intoxication, sound poisoning or will control could be categorized into Cursing Sorcery or Occult Sorcery, but sorcerers of both branches didn't recognize them.

After reading the scroll, Glenn had a big picture of how Intoxication sorcery would work, yet he didn't know how to exploit the toxins mentioned above. So he inquired:

"Sorcerer Norris, where shall I begin, then?"

"This." Norris pointed his finger to the word 'parasite'.

Glenn predicted something horrible. He thought:

'Is Sorcerer Norris gonna ask me to invite these parasites into my body?'

"Glenn." Norris moved his finger off the scroll and faced Glenn. "Success is reserved for those who are willing to take an unusual path. And we may need to run a little risk along the way..."

"Alas!" Glenn burst out when he heard "risk", which stopped Sorcerer Norris from talking!

"Hmm?" Norris remained calm.

Glenn hastened to make an apology to Norris about social faux pas, and told him his idea of parasite cultivation.

Norris was amazed at Glenn's vision.

"See? Glenn just deciphered the way of parasite culture. What a brilliant boy. One thing I always stress on is that creative minds

rule!" Norris gave Glenn a praise that he seldom bestowed on anybody. But he provided further information about these Lymph parasites.

"When these parasites settle in your cells, they will make the cell wall thick by the day. And when your body and these parasite reached a state of symbiosis, you would benefit."

"Sorcerer Norris, this lymph is still a kind of toxin, so would my body objects them? Or would I be in danger because of them?" Glenn looked worried.

"You will be in peril until they couldn't multiply further. And only then, you and these things would live in harmony!"

Glenn looked at this august sorcerer before him, wondering if he cared about his life at all.

"What sort of peril would I be in, then, Sorcerer Norris?"

"First, you are infected, and you will be, of course, weak. Besides, your energy would be consumed significantly while they multiply, and you would then become weaker. Even a knight could easily kill you then, for sure. Thus, to make sure you're safe, you would be staying in that room for three months." Norris raised his head slightly and threw a look at a room stuffed with sundries.

"I've to stay here for three months?" Glenn again lost his cool and said the words in an annoyingly high pitch.

In Glenn's memory, he had never been grounded. He had no parents, and his adopter Old Ham was tolerant with him. So, on hearing about such a long time of solitary confinement, he was sort of miffed for a second.

"Hah. You don't really have to stay for now." Norris continued.

Glenn was all ears.

"Because you have a four point constitution! Once infected by these things, you would die soon."

"But that puffer fish I've had..."

"The fish will not work until some time later!" Norris smiled.

Glenn got Norris' joke and returned the smile.

"If constitution is under 5 points, the victims die; between 10-30 points, body festers; higher than 30, lymphs couldn't live. So, you will soon be in perfect condition to start this this once the puffer fish in your stomach is absorbed."

Chapter 57: Second Stage Evolution

A week later, Glenn was locked in his room, reading a book. He looked skinny and feeble. He even had trouble breathing, and sweats formed and rolled down on his forehead.

Sorcerer Norris was outside of the glass door of the room where Glenn was confined. Glenn's premature debility had gone beyond his expectation. He said to himself:

"Oral medication seemed to work faster than being infected through the respiratory tract. I didn't go through these symptoms until three weeks after I breathed the parasites in." Norris recalled the days when he had cultivated the Intoxication Sorcery under his mentor a really long time ago. He then turned his attention to the vial of transparent potion in his hand.

Norris shook the vial in his hand for several minutes. He stopped when he heard a belching noise and steam spewed out of the vial.

The vial of potion was made for Glenn. After he took it, he could feel his essence was being collected and his spirit was boosted a little bit. He then put his hand on the crystal ball, which indicated a 2 point body constitution.

"My constitution value is down to 2 points." Glenn forced a smile to Norris, who was surveying him.

Norris was not perturbed by this anomaly, saying: "There is no need to worry. If you'd been infected by the Lymph parasites out of this Black Tower, you certainly wouldn't survive a three month period when you're terribly weak. But now, you're in my care. Nobody dares to touch you. Just think of it as a sickness, and it will pass."

Glenn nodded a yes and fell asleep on his small bed lying in the corner of the room.

Two months had fled by.

Glenn was lying on his bed, dying. His eyes were dim. He struggled to get up several times, but his efforts turned out to be in vain.

Sorcerer Norris frowned.

"It has been only two months. Why has his strength disappeared?" Norris mumbled as he walked into Glenn's room. He forced Glenn's eyes open and examined them using a sorcery related to optics.

"His pupils are having little reaction. That's bad. Letting him take the parasites orally was a mistake! The originally three month adaptation was shortened to two month. So the energy in Glenn's body required for the reproduction of the parasites was running low. That's why Glenn is so weakened." Norris whispered in a very low voice that was only audible to his ears.

Norris walked back and forth in his laboratory. Soon, he had an idea.

"Garfield! Come!" Norris shouted.

The black cat, which was named Garfield, arrived before Norris, its tail swinging.

"Pee on him!" Norris ordered the cat..

Garfield gawked, not quite following his master's orders.

"Hurry! Do it!" Norris continued.

The cat came to Glenn's room, jumped onto his bed, lifted his rear leg, and wee-weed on his chest.

Glenn sneezed instinctively.

Norris was around Glenn too. He asked Glenn about the pearl which allowed one to breathe underwater. Glenn murmured something. Norris rummaged Glenn's coat and found it in his inner pocket.

Norris put the pearl into Glenn's mouth. The next second, Glenn

was lifted off the bed about one foot. It was as if the pearl produced some repulsive force against the ground. Glenn eyes were shut. He was so weak that he appeared to have fainted.

Norris moved Glenn towards the large fish tank and soon arrived at the edge of it. As he was going to push Glenn into it, Garfield yelled:

"The fish will nibble him away!"

"They won't. Glenn has your body scent. It will scare the fish away." Norris looked at the cat, which seemed rather timid. The cat turned around and left.

As expected, the fierce-looking puffer fish dispersed the second Glenn broke the water. They swam to the other side of the tank but stared at Glenn greedily.

Three days later, Glenn opened his eyes and found himself floating in a water tank. He wanted to yell yet he couldn't. He was too weak.

"Rat, rat, rat!" Three loud and sharp knocks hit on the tank.

Glenn tilted his head and saw Garfield, who grunted to him: "You're fine. Have some more rest."

Glenn was obedient at the time and closed his eyes.

Glenn had to stay in the tank for two months. The first thing Glenn did after he got out of the tank was to concoct a potion to get rid of the cat's stinky smell.

Now Glenn had been qualified for learning Intoxication Sorcery. The lymph parasites were in optimal condition in his cells. And he had a constitution of six points, which should have been seven, but one point was lost as a result of the depletion of his energy within a short span of time.

"It seems you're fully recovered." Norris led Glenn to his laboratory. "Now we will see how to get you poisoned."

Glenn listened attentively.

"This is a stone containing a low potency toxin. But this stone could easily kill a human within 50 meters of it. And even if a human stayed a kilometer away, he/she would also be poisoned." Norris stuck out his hand, and an amber stone was gleaming. "But you have the protection of the lymphs. So you will be fine."

"How exactly would I benefit from being poisoned by it?" Glenn asked.

"Every time you get infected by this stone, your constitution will grow by one point. But don't get greedy. The process has to take place once a month. So, a year from now, your constitution will be at 18 points." Norris continued, "And by then, the stone's toxin will not affect you. We will then get to the real stuff of Intoxication Sorcery."

Chapter 58: Sytematic

It was commonly recognized that sorcerers who cultivated skills using elements were the strongest branch in the sorcery system in the sorcerer civilization. However, it didn't mean that these sorcerers possessed overwhelming power over others. They had created a comprehensive and systematic demarcation of sorceries and energy levels, and sorcerers of different levels had capabilities corresponding to their particular grade. This dynamic system worked to generate a power strong enough to change the world.

As for sorcerers belonging to systems other than elements exploitation or for the creatures on the Foreign Land, a standard grading system of sorceries hadn't formed. They took element sorcerer's ability ranking as an object of reference and thus defined their level of power.

For example, at the Krakatoa Harbor, Glenn had met a level four star denizen through the Dark Wells, which came from the Foreign Land. Yet its actual power only equaled to that of a level two sorcerer. There was no watershed dividing two adjacent levels of sorceries.

For the following half year, Glenn stayed at Sorcerer Norris's laboratory.

During this period, Glenn devoted most of his time absorbing the knowledge of intoxication sorcery—getting poisoned by the stone, and then letting the lymph parasite do its work of detoxification, thus improving his constitution.

Besides, he also worked on element sorcery and had made a considerable progress. Based on the current advancement speed, he believed that he could upgrade the Fire Bird Matrix to the Fire Bat Matrix, and the power would be levered up to ten times of its original raw power, a one point rise.

Apart from the Fire Bird sorcery, Glenn also devoted to the

activation of elements, but he was lacking in a motivator. Different sorcerers needed different stimulators because they had different physical qualities, thought patterns, inspirational moments and special opportunities. Occasions like this occurred. For example, the six-star Matrix in a sorcerer's soul had 1024 signs and symbols, yet they had their differences.

When an element creature was successfully summoned by a sorcerer, then this element would be activated. In the Gory Test, Glenn saw a mouse belonging to Belle and a bear which was the property of a girl. They were both element animals. One thing that was missing for Glenn to have an element animal was a stimulator.

Another important thing Glenn did concerned the rare fire element. Glenn had extracted that fire element from the crystal ball he had obtained from the third mirror drop place. The process was difficult because the element was separated from the split souls in the crystal ball. Now he desired to put this element into his already existing basic Element Matrix, taking place of some minor non-essential symbol or sign while at the same time keeping its power in leveraging up sorceries. However, there was a barrier hindering further progress. The Element Matrix objected this new, rare element. But Glenn was confident that, within half a year, he would succeed in completing the new matrix, and at that time, Glenn would could produce fire that wouldn't be extinguished and that could compare to Bionna's golden eye.

Glenn was alone with the cat in the laboratory. Norris had gone to the Holy Tower of Seven Rings and would be back in months. Glenn had asked him to get some living "humans" for his experiment.

By experimenting with living subjects, Glenn was confident that he could make breakthroughs in studying the mystery of Life code, an area of study belonging to him and only him.

‘Maybe Dickens has got the fancy microscope for me.’ Glenn thought. ‘Lafite and I haven't met for like a million years.’

Recalling Lafite, Glenn's heart quickened. At the time, someone suddenly knocked on the door.

It was a tidy girl with a lunchbox. She was tanned, sporty and sexy.

"It's yours, Glenn." With a brilliant smile, the girl held up the lunchbox to Glenn's chest and looked at him eagerly.

Glenn hurried to accept it, saying, "It smells great! Thank you!"

"Of course it smells great! But why are you keeping such a distance from me? Don't you think I'm sexy?" A blush suffused Glenn's cheeks on hearing these words.

The girl skipped towards Glenn and the next second, she laid her hand around Glenn's neck and pulled him to her chest.

"No!" Glenn pushed her away and said, "I have a girlfriend."

"I know. So what? Don't you want something more exciting? That lovely girlfriend of yours won't know." The girl tantalized, and put her hand back on Glenn's shoulder.

"Unless I wanna be dead. Lafite would kill me."

The girl was Liona, a student who came to Black Isotta earlier than Glenn. She delivered food to the 79th floor of the Black Tower. The reason she did that was because she could, as a result, acquire 20 magic stones every month and could visit Norris's personal library for free.

On the Sorcerer Continent, knowledge had to be bought with magic stones, unless it was given by one's mentor or was researched and studied by himself/herself. It was their respect for knowledge, and in this way, knowledge would be cherished.

Glenn left her and headed to the Black Tower.

Glenn had a random chat with Varro for a while, and then he went to Dickens, who led him to his private warehouse.

"Look! This is the microscope you ordered. I bought it in the Holy

Tower of Seven Rings. It belonged to a top level sorcerer. I bought it with 20,000 magic stones. And these are your share of profits for the Love Vials for the past half year. The 20,000 has been deducted from it." Dickens handed a bag of stones to Glenn.

Glenn walked straightly to the microscope, and tried it.

Glenn seemed unsatisfied with it. He frowned. "Is it the best microscope in the Holy Tower?"

"What? Is this still not good enough? Then I guess we'll have to resort to the Holy Tower of Sky-City." Dickens was so surprised that he opened his small eyes widely.

In fact, this microscope was merely a little bit advanced than the one Glenn owned now. Considering the current situation, Glenn might have to rely on the Gadflies for further study of the Life Code.

Glenn then left the Black Tower for his dormitory. He tried to contact Lafite through his crystal ball but failed. Attempts at trying to reach Chris and Robinson also failed. The crystal ball couldn't even detect their rough positions.

"Where have they gone? They must not be in the school!" Glenn wondered.

Being a little disappointed, Glenn walked to the school's library for a possible answer to the Life Code. It was different from Norris' library. Books in Norris' library were collected and arranged according to his personal hobbies, while in here, books were stored systematically.

"Books might give me some ideas to verify my hypotheses about the Life Code."

Chapter 59: Ancient Memory

Along with Chris, Nina, Robinson and Robin, Lafite had been on a field trip, in exploration of magical stones and other treasures. They returned a month later.

Glenn and Lafite met at Lafite's dormitory.

Prying into a sorcerer's privacy was a taboo on the Sorcerer Continent. But as Lafite's boyfriend, when he saw a vibrant strap on her back, he couldn't help asking in a careful voice:

"Since you've got a sorcerer to teach you stuff, why do you have to take risks by going into the wild instead of focusing on sorcery learning?"

Lafite gave him a snort.

"You think all students have your wisdom, your magical stones plus a good mentor? My mentor has 22 students; how do you expect him to give me much attention? However, we explored the ancient spot my father talked about, and it paid off! "

Glenn noticed that she was playing a gold key in her hand, and there was excitement all over her face, so he didn't say anything further and instead pulled her onto his chest gently.

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Sorcerer Norris had returned from the Holy Tower with three humanoids. They were brought back for Glenn for his experiments.

These humanoids had no expressions. Two of them seemed to belong to the same race. Both of them were over 7 feet tall, slim, pretty-looking and had no clothes on. Glenn circled around them twice and could tell that one was a male and the other was a female. Judging by their appearance, their difference from a human being were their huge ears, like a rabbit's. Besides, their hands were also strange. Each hand had six fingers protruded from

the palm, and each finger was separated by five joints. Therefore, it seemed that their hands were more flexible.

"They've been earmarked by the Holy Tower. So you won't be judged as a Dark Sorcerer for using them. And I've suppressed their mental strength. You can find me when you need it lifted." Norris was sitting on the chair, trying to contact someone through a crystal ball as he talked to Glenn.

"Got it."

Giving Sorcerer Norris a simple reply, Glenn then turned his attention to another humanoid. Glenn could tell that it was a female, but he couldn't discern any difference between her and a human. So he asked Norris about it.

"It's a demi-human, borne from a species living in the foreign lands which had been conquered by sorcerers. Some lower grade sorcerers couldn't check their lust and thus likely produced new species with local creatures. We call these kind of hybrid as demi-humans."

"Demi-humans? Then do they have their basic rights there?"

"Ha, we weren't taking over lands to propagate culture and knowledge. Basic rights for them? What a naive question! We ransack and plunder what they have, what they treasure and what they hold dear, as long as it satisfies our own needs. It may sound cruel but it's an aspect of advanced civilization. If we would decline someday, then their destiny today would be ours in the future. Don't you ever think that we would live in harmony!" Norris seemed vicious when he explained this, as if brutality defined sorcerers. "Eviscerate her, and you can see that she's different from us!" added Norris.

Glenn gulped; he didn't do as Norris suggested though. Seconds later, he asked suddenly.

"Is there a hierarchy or something existing among us and the

bigger universe?"

Norris was quite shocked at this inquiry and said, "You're such an ambitious student! I'll give a simple answer. The universe is stratified into three grades according to power and influence: Dynasty, Empire and Civilization. A dynasty consists of creatures that are mostly powerless. The number of level four or five sorcerers or living beings having similar level of power is very limited. They hide by concealing their geographic coordinates, and when invaded, they mainly take advantage of natural barriers and natural force to defend. Dynasties take up the most part of the universe."

Glenn nodded and said: "What about the Empires?"

"Within these large worlds(empires), there is usually at least one lifeform with the battle strength of a seventh level sorcerer. Moreover, the World Laws of these large worlds are special, thus it's difficult to invade them. And it can be considered to be the initial form of a Civilized world."

Norris looked at Glenn's glazed face and went on, "There are some empires within the domain of influence of a Civilization that reach agreements of mutual survival with them. The empires pay tributes to Civilizations in exchange for non-aggression."

"What about Civilizations?" Glenn couldn't wait for the answer.

"Every Civilization has invaded at least one Empire, and they have a huge sphere of influence. Others exist around them. But they've their distinctive trajectory of development. That's aggression." As Norris was saying this, he seemed to have lost in thought and began to speak with a serious tone. "The Sorcerer Civilization met two other Civilizations in its long history, and wars broke out each time. Each war lasted hundreds, if not thousands of years. The wars were inevitable because Civilizations are aggressive in nature."

"Two wars?" Glenn gasped. He then hastened to ask: "Did we

win?"

"Humph. We didn't lose. If we had lost, why would you still stand in here? We would have been slaves to them!" Norris sneered coldly, and his voice dropped to a lower pitch.

"The first war occurred in ancient times. So there are no written records for it. But, it was said that the Civilization around the ancient Sorcerer Civilization was shattered into pieces and since then, the broken pieces have been clinging to the Sorcerer Civilization for their debased existence." Norris paused for a moment and then continued, "The second war was clearly documented though. The Sorcerer Civilization was at an absolute disadvantage. Our enemy had smashed our last ditch defense and even marched into the expansive underground world beneath the Sorcerer Continent, which was the last piece of land we had at the time—the Dynasties and Empires we had taken up had been lost. It was the closest the Sorcerer Civilization had come the verge of extinction!"

Glenn's eyes widened, and his face appeared ghastly. He then inquired.

"How did we defeat them?"

"Defeat them? Norris shook his head, and then he said slowly. "We didn't defeat them. It was not possible. Although we were assuredly a powerful Civilization back then, with all these years of development after we had won the first war, yet the enemy was way more powerful. We didn't see any hope at all."

Glenn was still in shock, and he detected a grief in Norris' eyes.

"We had no way of surviving. However, there was one great, great sorcerer. He used his wisdom and cast a sorcery that was beyond imagination, that no one could ever be able to figure out. He used his life as the fulcrum and levered the Sorcerer Continent with a magical stick named the Destiny Lever. He powered the lever by putting a crystal stone which contained a huge amount of

energy on the other end of the stick. As a result, he moved the Sorcerer Continent to the current geographic coordinates!"

"He moved the whole continent?!" There were no words to describe Glenn's shock. He had no expressions and he even couldn't speak out a word smoothly.

"There's no need to doubt it. This is real. And we wore down out the enemies in the underground world beneath the Sorcerer Continent because they had lost their support. After that, we developed our own Dragon sorcerers there. As for this endlessly expansive place we're living in now, we are actually foreigners who have occupied the aboriginals' lands. All sorcerers who had survived this disaster had one mission only: to make the sorcerer world stronger and when we're ready, to recover our old coordinates and to annihilate our enemies and take back what we have lost. That's what we call Demon Hunting Expedition."

After he finished that, Norris looked out of the Black Tower.

"The last words before that great sorcerer died were inscribed in every sorcery school."

"With my knowledge, give me a fulcrum on which to place it, and I shall move the world." Glenn murmured.

"Oh. You noticed that! I thought that only the ones who knew about the situation would pay attention to it." Seeing that Glenn had memorized that well-known dictum, he seemed comforted.

Glenn gulped. "So it is! This maxim was said by such a great sorcerer."

Glenn recalled the night when he wandered to the tablet recording that sorcerer's quote. Before that night, he thought they were just lofty and pompous words. After that night, he had been thinking that it might be a sentence full of helpless exclamation! Now, considering that sorcerer's situation, he could truly grasp this helplessness. Glen gashed his teeth, simmering with a complex

feeling of anger and an eagerness to become stronger.

Norris noticed the gloomy yet determined look on Glenn's face and sighed. "He's like the younger me!"

‘Grow up quickly because a new war is on its way! Through other worlds’ creatures, we’ve learned some vague information about our enemy. We’re very far away from each other, yet both of us are aggressive, and both of us will destroy every obstacle between us, and a full-out war will be on then. The future of the sorcerer world needs sorcerers building new branch of sorceries and creating a brilliant history.’

# Chapter 60: The Glenn Dissimilation Sorcery

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In Sorcerer Norris' laboratory, Glenn placed the two humanoids of same race onto the testing table.

Before the experiment, Glenn had enclosed the testing table as a safeguard for possible unexpected risks. He looked solemn as he took out his sorcery notes and flipped through it. A moment later, he sat onto the chair, lost in thought.

'I've tested Gadflies on frogs and mice in separate experiments. These things were all deformed horribly as a result. According to my guess back then, the mysterious and irregularly-formed small glowing points in their host's cells must be the true form of Life Code and must contain the original life information. Besides, every cell must have its will for survival and these wills constitute the volition of a soul.'

Glenn paused for a second and then shook his head, saying: "Maybe these weak creatures couldn't take it when their form of life information was altered by the Gadflies. Then I've got to do it on humanoids to verify my guess!"

Thinking about this, Glenn rose up and looked at the female humanoid lying on the table.

Glenn stuck out his fingertip and slowly, a Gadfly the size of a rice grain was squeezed out from his skin. Since Glenn's and the Gadflies' souls were connected, the Gadflies were like a natural organ of his. Thus, he wasn't feeling uncomfortable during the process.

Glenn then put the Gadfly into the female's body for it to multiply. She wasn't resisting because Norris had suppressed her mental strength. She was essentially a vegetative being.

Seven days later.

After Glenn had completed other experiments, he came back at the testing table. Using his mental strength, he could feel that there were now tens of thousands adult Gadflies in the female's body.

With such a quantity of Gadflies, Glenn could continue with his experiment now.

Glenn took something off the female's body as specimen first, and then he prepared an intermediate stone to replenish the magical force, which would be running low during the long-lasting experiment.

Glenn looked serious. He took a deep breath and then stroked the subject's belly, which was smooth. He closed his eyes slowly, and the next moment, he strained every effort and energized the Gadflies in the female's body, trying to bring out the Gadflies' best capability in affecting Life Code, an ability Gadflies were born with.

Glenn kept on energizing the Gadflies in the female's body by using his magical force, which gave out mysterious force that affected every cell of hers.

The process lasted for a day. Glenn's face had turned ghastly pale. And fear appeared in his eyes when he noticed the things within the enclosure.

The female's right hand had grown a big mouth in the palm, and the mouth moved towards her neck. It mangled the neck with its sharp teeth after it arrived and later snapped it completely; her tongue had jumped out of her real mouth and was crawling on the table like a serpent; her legs were covered with eyes, thighs with tendrils, and there was something moving in her belly, inflating and deflating it.

Glenn was even more pale now. He murmured: "Sure enough. Energizing the Gadflies without really controlling them would crash the Life Code!"



Glenn calmed himself down a little bit and grabbed many tools and material for conducting cursing sorcery. He then took out the specimen he had taken from her as the cursing medium.

Moments later, Glenn perpetrated some simple cursing sorceries on these things in the enclosure, yet he found that they had no reactions.

Glenn looked intense.

"It seems that her life information has been altered entirely, and these things don't belong to her any longer!"

As Glenn was taking notes about the experimental results and writing down his thoughts, he had an inspiration.

"If life information could be changed, then I would be immune to the curse sorceries which use personal information as a medium. Better still, by using Occult sorcery, hints might be found to modify one's form of life information in the cells to the enemy's, and this way, I could even curse the cursor!"

Glenn was thrilled at this new thought.

Another seven days had passed, and the male subject's body had been infested by adult Gadflies too. After taking a specimen from the male's body, Glenn pulled out a vial of turbid liquid. It was extracted and refined from the cranes, which served as the source to effectively neutralize Gadflies' mutational effect.

Glenn of course had no sympathy to the subject, and injected the whole vial of liquid into the male's body.

"Let's see if this liquid could stop the energized Gadflies from causing the subject's mutation."

A day later, Glenn came back at the testing table, and he looked wistfully at the male who was covered by weird organs and tendrils. However, although the male had undergone mutations, different from the last test on the female, whose new limbs and organs were acting on their own wills and were killing each other,

the mutated limbs and organs of the male's were still "listening to" the will of his soul. And when Glenn cursed the male using the specimen belonging to the male, the extra body parts had no reactions as well.

"Maybe if I give him enough of these liquids, then he won't deform at all!"

Without any hesitation, Glenn put another vial of the liquid into the male's body. Obviously, that male humanoid was reacting and soon recovered to his original state.

There was wisdom sparkling Glenn's eyes.

"If someone has an organ capable of producing that liquid, then he could change his form of life information. If that's the case, cursing would not make a difference! And with this organ, the owner could also excel in camouflage and vital organ regeneration."

All these brilliant ideas came to Glenn's mind in such a short time, and because of this, he became hectic. Almost immediately, he had decided to learn anatomy. That way, he could modify and maybe evolve that liquid-producing organ in cranes, and then transplant it into his body. By then, he would be able to create a new sorcery by which cursing would be negated and camouflage would be easily done.

"I will name this great sorcery after me—the Glenn Dissimilation Sorcery!!"

As Glenn was leaving the laboratory, in his excitement, he noticed the demi-human and halted. Somehow, another wonderful idea struck him. It might sound unrealistic, but Glenn was still analysing it for its practicality using his wisdom.

Seconds later, he returned to the male and got out a Gadfly from him. Then, through his soul, Glenn ordered that Gadfly to memorize the male's Life Code information and then he put it into

the demi-human's body.

"I'll come back and see the results in seven days." With the Gadfly transfer done, Glenn then went for his mentor to learn about anatomy.

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A week later.

Before the testing table, Glenn cursed the demi-human using the specimen taken from the male's body. To his surprise, she was reacting to the cursing!

"Does it mean that Gadflies have memories?"

Having made this huge discovery, Glenn hurried to his dormitory and came back with drops of blood that belonged to Mina—Daughter of Sun. He had conserved them in a refrigerated vessel. Afterwards, he quickly took out a Gadfly from his body and put it into the blood.

According to Mina's own words, she had [a body of flames](#). It was a gift.

Glenn had learned that gifts were sudden mutations made by some living beings in a population. They obtained it when adapting to the environment.

Therefore, if Glenn could change some of his life information, and allowed part of his Life Code have Mina's mutated information, then he would have her gift. If that became reality, Glenn might become the most powerful sorcerer in the sorcerer world, and even no upcoming sorcerers would match him! And the simple reason was that he could copy gifts that he desired and plant it in himself.

However, these were just Glenn's wild guesses. They had to be experimented before they could prove to work. And according to the nature's rules, copying others' gift was subject to fundamental restrictions, and thus was impossible to achieve, or this would

break the balance of living beings' existence.

What Glenn couldn't understand was the fact that gifts would just give sorcerers a head start. The higher level a sorcerer was at, the more negligible gifts' role would be. The thing that determined a sorcerer's achievement was knowledge. And Glenn's gift-copying idea was a part of knowledge, which was way more powerful and important.

A body of flame is like a phoenix, which obtains new life by arising from the ashes of its predecessor.

Chapter 61: The Glenn Secret Tri-Sorcery

Glenn had moved the Gadfly which had been nurtured in Mina's drops of blood into his own body, and with it fully growing in his body, his mind was filled with a feeling of both delight and misery.

Glenn was gleeful because he had made surprising discoveries—his capability in mastering fire element had been growing exaggeratedly. Beyond that, his body could feel, albeit vaguely, the existence of free fire element energy in the air. It had to be mentioned that the ability to feel the energy out there in nature belonged exclusively to sorcerers!

With the crystal ball floating in the air, Glenn conducted the Fire Bird sorcery which had an offensive power nine times its raw, primitive power.

Boom!

A fire with high temperature followed the explosion and when it settled, Glenn moved his hand towards the crystal ball and felt the degree of the attack. He couldn't help but yell in a thrilled voice.

"The attack power reached 138 points!"

Up to this point, Glenn had 29 points of mental strength, and 280~301 points of magical force. Considering the students' utilization rate of mental strength, which should be about a quarter, then the raw attack power was about 7 points. When the fire element attack was launched in the form of Firebird, its power should be somewhere between 55 points and 65 points, since the Firebird would enhance the raw power by 8 times. Then why was it indicated at 138 points on the crystal ball? There were about 80 points left unaccounted for. So, by doing the math here, Mina's 'Body of Flame' property had elevated the raw fire element attack power to a level that was tenfold! The Firebird enhanced it by 9 times, and the Body of Flame by 10 times! When put together, the attack power would be 19 times of its raw attack power!

Green took in a cold breath.

No wonder Mina had behaved so arrogantly and overbearingly in the Gory Test, as if no one could compare to her. Now with her Body of Flame, and 29 points of mental strength, Glenn could almost match her energy level, and he could easily pull off a fire element attack with over 100 points of power.

In addition, the Body of Flame had an affinity to fire element, and because of this, a fire element assault which was below 65 degrees would be totally negated by Glenn. And Glenn was still evolving passively because the Gadflies in his body were helping him become more resistant to attacks of various elements.

The Body of Flame was indeed a very powerful talent for sorcery students!

Highly strengthened sorcery skills led to Glenn's ecstasy. However, a crack had appeared on his Life Code, which sentenced him to a miserable state. Artificially modifying Life Code, however small a part of it, would inevitably cause it to crack.

According to Glenn's guess, if modifications were done more than three times to the Life Code, then it would then break down entirely. As a result, his life form would be in a disorder. Technically speaking, the situation would be what ensued when the Gadflies were fully energized and yet there were no liquids to control them.

And the crack thing happened when Glenn merely copied a tiny part of Mina's life information into his Life Code, and Mina and him were both humans. If it had been creatures of other sorts, his Life Code might have been brought to a complete failure by just altering once.

This restriction could be explained this way: besides his own gift, Glenn could only possess three gifts belonging to other sorcerers. Now, it was his realization that a sorcerer's strongest power originated from knowledge, and gifts would only represent tools

that played auxiliary roles in a certain period.

Having tested his Body of Flame, Glenn recovered his composure after a long time.

"The Body of Flame is surely a strong sorcery, and I can still copy two more sorceries from others for my own use. Maybe I'm little bit short-sighted for now, but I'd still believe copying sorceries was a great sorcery itself. So there needs to be a name to mark it for its eternal commemorative significance. Let's call it the 'Glenn Secret Tri-Sorcery'."

Apart from the Body of Flame, Glenn's Life Code could allow two more gifts. But there was no need to rush in getting them. Body of Flame had been the strongest gift he had witnessed in the Gory Test. So it would be a pity if the two chances were wasted on sorceries that had less potential. Gifts couldn't determine a sorcerer's achievement, yet they could decide his/her orientation of development.

At least for now, Glenn had no knowledge on how to lift the limits concerning how many gifts could be etched into his Life Code.

As Glenn was leaving the room, intending to work on the intoxication sorcery, the demi-human bowed to him with a respectful looks on her face and said in a low voice:

"My master, Glenn."

Glenn replied by giving her a nod.

This demi-human was called Yulia. Glenn had promised to set her free and to let her lead a normal life in the sorcerer world. But the premise was that it had to be when the pouch in her body had evolved and had grown used to living in humans. By then Glenn would transplant the pouch into his own body.

This pouch was the crane's organ which had produced the liquid. After having done some transformation on the pouch, Glenn had

placed it in Yulia's body for it to adapt to a human body.

Glenn reached out his hand and stroked Yulia's belly. She grew shy and her hands were lost for position, but she did not dodge. By using his mental strength, Glenn could feel what was going on within the pouch. It was displaying a strong vitality. By this vitality, Glenn knew that it had succeeded in adapting to a human body.

"Are you experiencing any discomfort?"

Yulia shook her head timidly and replied, "No."

"Ok." Yulia's answer was what Glenn had expected. He then replied lightly, "Then next month, we'll do the transplant operation. If successful, as I've promised you, I'll let you have a normal life here."

Glenn did not pay attention to Yulia anymore and walked towards the intoxication room in the laboratory.

"Thank you, Master Glenn." Yulia appreciated Glenn and sobbed in her delight.

'For that male subject, I need to preserve him well.' Glenn thought.

One year later.

The symbol representing the inextinguishable fire element had been etched onto Glenn's basic Fire Element Matrix. Thus, his understanding on certain properties of fire element energy had been fundamentally intensified. The change was as fundamental as the shift of liquid water being solidified into ice.

In a sizzling sound, a flame was produced on Glenn's fingertip. Glenn enjoyed how it didn't die out. Half a day later, Glenn had developed some basic insight into it.

This flame was most effective in attacking those sorceries and enclosures which relied on physical shields. The flame fed on

the energy in the shields and this way, it became truly inextinguishable. But one premise for it to not go out was that the energy points stimulated by Glenn and his rival's attacks hadn't encountered a qualitative change. But even if the other side was not using a shield, his flame could still cause enduring and constant damage to the enemy. And this "not going to be put out" attribute could also be used to create a defensive sorcery—to form a flame armor.

If Glenn had been equipped with the Body of Flame and the Inextinguishable Flame, he would have been able to hold down the other six Desperaters in the third mirror drop place and commandeer their rewards. Actually, what Glenn was capable of now was the ideal state Mina's mentor had expected Mina to be at.

Apart from the two mentioned sorceries, during the past year, Glenn had upgraded his Fire Bird element matrix to the Bat element matrix. It meant that the Fire Bird's nine times enhancement was now upgraded to ten times up from the raw attack power.

"When the upcoming compulsory task is completed, I'll try to learn two sorceries controlling fire element. I'm lucky that there are several good choices listed in the library, otherwise, I'll have to consult sorcerers on the third and fourth floors of the Black Tower at the cost of magical stones," Glenn murmured.

All these sorceries Glenn had been studying were all achieved by element sorcerers who had used knowledge to level skills up. And now, after Glenn had energized the Gadflies within him, with the pouch producing liquids to regulate them, he stuck out a finger slowly, and it immediately transformed into a tendril, and at its very end was a mouth packed with teeth, looking heinous and grisly. And Glenn's blond hair, when ruffled, bristled like needles made of steel, keeping his back from harm as if it was an armor.

As for how he appeared, unlike the sorcerers who had cultured Hematology Sorcery, he looked just as normal as other humans,

yet he had now embarked on the road of evolving to a monster. And this was definitely a road of evolution for senior sorcerers.

Several months later, Glenn got out of the closed stone chamber, which was used for radioactive purposes. He had stayed there for one hourglass to expose himself to radiation. He sighed because the radiation didn't work.

"I'm almost immune to this low-energy radioactive stone. I'd better inject the formula toxins now."

Another half month passed. Glenn, with his black crystal ball in his hand, was feeling his health status:

Mental Strength: 30 points;

Magical Force: 285~309 points;

Constitution: 36 points;

Stamina: 100~101 points;

Physical Strength: 35~120 points;

Vitality: 110~157 points

Glenn made a wry smile, sneering at himself for having such low points in stamina, physical strength and vitality while his constitution was measured at a wobbling 36 points.

As Glenn's mentor had emphasized, knowledge was not sufficient for a steady enhancement when it came to a constitution-building sorcery. He had to go outside for some exercise to line up his basic attributes (stamina, physical strength and vitality) with the essential power (constitution).

Still, a two-year compulsory task was going to be assigned. Glenn wondered what his mentor would ask him to do. But he was sure that whatever that task was, he had to travel far.

Chapter 62: The Demon-Hunting Mission

"Master."

Glenn stood beside Sorcerer Norris, waiting for his mentor to assign the task.

Norris responded to Glenn with a nod, and then he pointed his withered hand to a crystal ball in front of him. The ball glittered and a shining scene appeared before Glenn.

Norris said to Glenn drily, "This mission is to hunt for a Black Sorcerer. I've given it some thought and decided that this Black Sorcerer is just someone who has gone astray, someone whose sorceries were just at a student level. It would thus be suitable for you students to go on this mission."

"Students?" asked Glenn. "Many students would be engaged in this mission?"

Norris saw Glenn had finished taking notes on the routes and clues of this mission. He then closed the scene and said, "This mission is inside information. I've allotted this job to you and three other students. I believe the four of you have the potential to become a Demon-Hunting sorcerer. But remember that you are the weakest among them for now. And the area where you're going is near the Ivory Castle School of Sorcerers, which will send out four students for the mission as well."

Thinking about the area, Glenn estimated that if he went there on foot, it would take about a month, or he could fly there by constantly draining his magical force, thereby arriving in five or six days. But he would lose his chance to exercise. And since Glenn hadn't met the other three Black Isotta students his mentor mentioned, he didn't respond much to the remark of him being the worst.

"So eight students for one mission... then who gets the credit

once it's accomplished? And what specifically do I need to pay heed to in this mission?"

"The one who gets that Black Sorcerer's head gets the credit. This is an inside mission, so we old fellas will give 'inside' reward. And what to pay heed to? Just to take care of your life. That's the most important thing." There was a hint of warning in Norris' eyes.

"Many students and even sorcerers degenerate to Black Sorcerers willingly, and the biggest reason is that Black Sorcerers have the most thoroughly-studied knowledge on life and death. In other words, they are a bunch of sorcerers who are bent on life and death sorely. They are absorbed in sorceries which are aimed at killing!"

"Does it mean that they are better in battles than ordinary sorcerers?" Glenn frowned.

"You can think of it that way," Norris replied drily.

"Then why the Sorcerer Continent forbids..."

Norris cut in before Glenn could finish. He then said in a tone that was close to contempt.

"Were you asking why we forbid Black Sorcerers?"

"Yeah." Glenn nodded.

"Humph," Norris sneered. "The Black Sorcerers in the Sorcerer Continent are nothing more than a horde of evil sorcerers who, in order to do research on life and death, use humans as experimental specimens. They create disorders and regression. You can see it in the Black Field. Yet..."

The Black Field was where the Black Sorcerers were gathered. They acted according to the Black Sorcerers rules, which varied widely compared to ordinary sorcerers.

Norris stopped before completing his sentence and stared at Glenn: "Don't you think these ancient sorcerers who have lived many, many years have realized it's a good idea—to raise Black

Sorcerers to make this a stronger place?"

"I don't think they haven't."

Of course Glenn wouldn't believe that the idea hadn't occurred to the ancient sorcerers.

Norris then added, "But all sorcerers yearn to become Demon-Hunters. And Demon-Hunters are the legit 'Black Sorcerers' nurtured by the Holy Tower, and they are top-notch sorcerers who are able to hunt and kill Black Sorcerers. But there is a little difference between them: the 'Black Sorcerers' we nurture do experiments with creatures from the foreign lands for their study on life and death, not humans."

Glenn displayed an intense look on his face. "No wonder those students have already had 40 points of mental strength decades ago, and they were not attempting to make a breakthrough to become a sorcerer! They've been waiting for a chance to be nurtured as a Demon-Hunter by the Holy Tower, which occurred once per centennial."

....

Three days later.

At the school entrance, Glenn rendezvoused with the other three students who were also tasked with the 'Clearing the Black Sorcerer in the Pamir Town' mission.

The group exchanged eye contacts first, and afterwards, all attention was focused on Glenn.

"You are a new guy? You're neither Sam, nor Kyrie nor Bionna. Interesting!" said an over-1.9-meter tall, male student, who wore a metal ring on his nose and was equipped with a large fan on his back. He seemed so barbarous!

Over the past two years, Glenn had grown familiar with the Top Ten students in the Black Isotta. There were already students who had that title, but they were chosen merely from the first-year

students. However, the real Top Ten had included all of the students in the school. They were much stronger, their actual strength matched their name, and none of them was a pseudo-master! The ten elite students were further divided into two ranks. Four of them were rated into the first rank, and their power and prestige were generally greater than the other rank. Through decades of accumulation, they had become top-class students by passing tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, real tests.

The talking guy did not belong to the Top Ten, though. But there must be something that had distinguished him, since Norris and other old-age sorcerers had chosen him to strive for the Demon-Hunter qualification.

"I'm Glenn," said Glenn calmly, wearing his mysterious Ashen Mask. He said it in a tone which suggested his desire to stay low-key and that he loathed to talk much.

Hand-shaking and kissing for greeting didn't exist in sorcerers' social etiquette, otherwise one's information would be easily stolen.

"I came to this school just prior to you. My name is Ryan. I'm one of the big names in this school, yet not as well-known as her!" Ryan pointed to a girl beside him.

What came into Glenn's view first was the girl's figure. She had a round, fat body, and on Glenn's first sight, he recognized that she was the girl whom Glenn had found at the gate of the dilapidated Water Tower when he was about to leave. She belonged to the Top Ten and was ranked 10th. She was the Winter Ice Soul—Bethany.

Back in the dilapidated Water Tower, the light was faint, and Glenn was terrified, so he didn't get the chance to watch her—this real powerful student. So he couldn't help but give her a survey.

Glenn's first impression about Bethany was a natural, impregnable fortress when she was standing before him. Her imposing figure gave her a majestic look, and Glenn decided that

her constitution was under no circumstances lower than his. Besides, Glenn was just a half-baked element sorcerer!

A Meteor hammer was on Bethany's back, shedding a chilling light, and its metal chain rolled down to surround her waist. She was in a black leather coat, which had taken place of her old loose cloak. This was her battle-wear! On looking further, one would find her short haircut, which was clinched in strands. She seemed very unfeminine, and rather, her eyes gave the one who stared into them a freezing cold, like Sam's eyes occasionally did.

"You're a wuss! I saw you at the Water Tower that day." Bethany stared at Glenn coldly, in a manner that she was not trying to hide at all, and her eyes gave Glenn the feeling that she detested cowardice.

Glenn didn't respond. He didn't intend to explain.

Sorcerers might be of an eccentric temper, but one thing was for sure—the weak would never have much of a choice, so the weaker should try to avoid all potential conflicts with the stronger ones.

Glenn was probably not as enfeebled as Norris had indicated, but he was certain that he couldn't compare to the girl before him.

As Glenn was thinking this, the last student in the group approached him out of the blue. To Glenn's great surprise, he noticed two extra heads sneak out of the student's cloak, and the three heads kept on sniffing at Glenn.

"It's so strange. Why am I not sensing your body odor?" The three heads stared at Glenn suspiciously.

"The Three-Headed Hematology Sorcery?" Glenn didn't answer but retorted.

According to 'Canine Olfactory Enhancement and Odor Mapping', based on sorcerers' study on odors, the known creature which was most sensitive to odors was the three-headed Cerberus, which could discern any odors known to sorcerers.

"Ha, you do know something! New guy, you can call me Harry Reid." As Harry was talking, his three heads were all demonstrating an air of arrogance. Knowing that Glenn was just a student who entered school just five years ago, he didn't bother to be polite and ordered, "Tell me how you made your odors disappear!"

Glenn's pupils contracted despite the fact that this change was hidden beneath his mask. He replied lightly, "What do I get in exchange?"

"I won't give you a hard time on this trip. That's what you will get!" Harry said in a tone suggesting that Glenn giving him the 'deodor' recipe was what Glenn was supposed to do.

For someone who had made huge progress in honing his sorceries, this irrational requirement was noticeably not working!

Glenn had made a quick judgment. Bethany was much better than him, so not messing with her was a decision he had made. As for Ryan, he didn't have a clear advantage over Glenn even if they were not on par, and even if Glenn was not in a better position, this disadvantage would arise from the fact that his constitution-building sorcery hadn't been practiced in field trips.

This Harry, however, was not much of a threat.

Beneath his Ashen Mask, Glenn sneered grimly. "Then only one of us would have the chance to join."

A silence... a dead silence followed Glenn's words.

Ryan shrugged and then complained: "It seems I've to be a lone wolf again! Big Sister Bethany, I'm going. See you." Ryan went away, leaving behind the others. As he was leaving, he shouted: "We follow the old rule—If we can't take down the Black Sorcerer, then we leave a signal of gathering at the nearest city gate."

Bethany took another glance at Glenn, and her opinion about Glenn seemed to have improved.

"No matter if you're gonna survive, I'd like to retract what I said about you." Bethany strode away. She moved in an agile way despite her excessive size.

Glenn threw a glance on Harry's three heads which were still in shock and mumbled, "See you in the Bramble Forest."

These words were uttered by Glenn in a way that said killing was as simple as enjoying his meals.

After that challenge had been raised, Glenn got out the place, leaving behind the view of his back and the livid looks on Harry's face.

Chapter 63: Hunting Down

Three days later in the Bramble Forest.

In a booming sound, a ball of fire with extreme heat dashed ahead and broke a green, corrosive beam of energy. After the beam had been scattered, a roaring scream followed. Afterwards, there appeared a crystal wire which disappeared in a flash on the spot and then reappeared tens of meters away. It then scampered off.

"It's useless. You're never gonna run out of my control!" Glenn shouted to his enemy after the fire blasted. "You have a unique smell. It's a torch in the dark, thus you'd have no chance in sneaking attacks! I'll chase you till you're a dead man!"

Rancor seethed in Glenn's mind.

At the same time, Glenn picked up a part of a finger on the ground. Losing it did not put him ill-at-ease. He put the finger on his wound in the palm. Soon, the palm where his finger had been lost sprouted an army of thin, short tendrils, which then reconnected the finger to his palm. A few seconds later, Glenn flexed that finger of his as he sneered, and his hand became intact again!

After Glenn's hand had recovered, he proceeded with his chase with the [End Sound Bone](#) dagger in his hand.

Over the past three days, Glenn and Harry had been engaged in fights for several dozens of times, and with no exceptions, Harry had been losing out to Glenn on every occasion. When Harry was about to lose, he would apply a mysterious wind element sorcery and magically succeeded in fleeing. So Glenn had failed to cause his complete death.

Harry's escape sorcery would not represent the only nagging problem for Glenn. His three heads and the sorceries each of them owned were causing Glenn real trouble—the triple heads were able

to attack with corrosion, flame and strong poison respectively. These sorceries could also be handled by Glenn, who was now basically immune to fire and poisoning, and his mask would not be eroded easily. However, Harry had very sharp nails on his fingers, which he obtained when cultivating Hematology Sorcery. They could pierce through Glenn's shield and hurt him.

Of course, Harry had incurred injuries from Glenn's armor made of the Extinguishable Flame! And using the Glenn Dissimilation Sorcery, Glenn's wounds would be healed readily.

Glenn hummed a tune coldly. Then, using his enhanced sense of smell, he sniffed around, trying to find out the whereabouts of Harry.

Glenn had made his decision. He would track down this detestable student even if he couldn't accomplish his bigger mission here. For him, this trip was meant for some exercise and thus elevating his stamina, strength and vitality to a level matching his 36 points of constitution! Either way, he would get exercised! Actually, these three properties had been leveled up a little bit due to his constant battles in the past three days, and consequently, the potential of his constitution had been explored partially.

Several hourglasses had slid away.

Glenn had found Harry, who was dealing with his wounds. Glenn yelled in a deafening voice and came to him with vigorous strides. At the same time, he had pulled off his Bat sorcery to get his enemy, after which an explosion and a flame followed. Harry activated his corrosion, flame and poison energy in no time to fight off and meanwhile ran hastily out of the reach of Glenn's flame attack.

After Harry's previous contacts with the flame, he had grown conscious of its terrifying power. He simply couldn't get into contact with it! For one thing, the flame had a high degree of

power. Besides, once caught by it, it wouldn't be quenched. It was a hopeless situation!

"Glenn, you're overdoing it," Harry said angrily, with his leftmost head panting for air. Meanwhile, the right head, whose eyes were bloodshot, implored: "Glenn, we were wrong about you before. We shouldn't have..."

"Shut up, you coward! I'm not allowing you to say something like this!" the left head cut in and reproached.

"Who gives you the right to stop me from talking? It was you who were being greedy and insisted on..." the right head roared, showing no signs of giving in.

The two heads kept on brawling, and the head between them glared at Glenn in an indignant yet frightened manner. Its face was blanched, because this head had had excessive loss of blood when it cut its right arm which had caught on Glenn's flame.

Glenn watched the three heads as they quarreled. As it was circulated, Hematology sorcery cultivation resulted in huge increase in power. However, the newly required capabilities came with flaws! Imagine if Glenn had three heads, he definitely couldn't do any research now.

"What do you want?" asked the middle head of Harry.

"What do I want? Hum..." Still with his mask on, Glenn seemed that he wasn't going to give them a chance for negotiation. He seemed to have made up his mind to destroy them!

Glenn made another maneuver and charged towards the breathless Harry. In Glenn's hand was his weapon of the Inextinguishable Flame.

A moment later, Harry once again turned into a crystal wire and shot himself to dozens of meters away, and then he shouted back towards Glenn, "Glenn, I'm not gonna be killed by you so easily!"

"Then I'll keep doing the good work until that moment come!"

Glenn stopped and screamed back. The next second, he accelerated and ran after Harry.

Another day went by.

Glenn had been led by Harry to a stretch of field blossoming with purple flowers.

Glenn scorned: "Trying to rub out the strength of my hunting nose by using pollen's pungent smell? How naive are you!"

Harry didn't have the slightest idea that Glenn had used his mask's ultrasonic-positioning feature, and had located him, who was like a stray dog licking his wound miserably.

In a gully where weeds had run rampant appeared that same, cold, sneering face. Harry couldn't help but panic with despair, exclaiming: "That's not possible. You're just a new guy! You're not one of these three well-known students! How come you have such a strong power? It's so impossible! Even if you're one of them, you shouldn't be this strong!"

Glenn had no intention of making small talk. He 'welcomed' Harry with the same move—the Fire Bat sorcery!

A big fire formed after an explosive noise. Immediately, energies of these same three properties burst out, and afterwards, Harry tried to use that mysterious wind element sorcery to escape again! However, this time, his face darkened. His feet had been tied up by a damn vine!

Harry just took a moment to break free of the vine. But what followed the vine attack was a strange tendril penetrating the fire to reach him, and it was holding a dagger.

In a whoosh sound, Harry's right head came off clean.

The fallen head kept shouting "no" because it had caught on fire. The screaming stopped suddenly and as its owner Harry again transformed into a crystal wire and fled away in a flash.

Glenn emerged slowly from behind the fire and took a glance at the head on the ground, which was still burning wildly.

"Having lost a head, let's see how you're gonna escape now!"

This being said, Glenn kicked that head of Harry's to the side and then he sniffed around for the traces left by Harry and went on his hunting .

Glenn had chased him for two consecutive days The expansive Bramble Forest presented many barriers for the hunting. But Glenn could see that this was the final-ditch struggle made by Harry, who did not have many resources left at his disposal after having lost a head and an arm. Therefore, Glenn didn't hasten any longer. He was just letting Harry run in his desperation while at the same time taking some exercises himself.

Out of the blue, two persons got in the way.

Glenn pulled up, looking at them. One was Harry. One of his remaining head had recoiled into his cloak, and the other was almost in a mental collapse. Its eye sockets were even more dented, and his pale skin reeked of a decayed odor.

The one with Harry was a female student. Glenn hadn't seen her before, though he had a feeling that this student was stronger than Harry.

The female looked just the same as normal humans. So she seemed to have not cultivated Hematology sorcery.

"Glenn, I'm Lumen. You may don't know me, but I guess you might have heard of my partner. His name is Gade."

The female was skinny. She had a fair skin, short green hair and a pair of black-framed glasses. When she smiled, her squinted eyes were like a crescent moon. She seemed very nice.

"Thunder Axe Gade, Captain of the Ivory Hunting Team. Yeah, I know him!" There was a minor change in Glenn's facial expressions yet his voice was calm. It still carried no feelings.

The female student was pleased at Glenn's response.

"To tell you the truth, Harry is a member of our team—the Ivory Hunting Team. I'd like to speak for the captain himself and reimburse you to your satisfaction for what Harry has done."

Lumen seemed confident, smiling like a spring flower in its blossom. She then said softly, "Respectable Glenn, would you like to make an accommodation and consider it as a favor to our team?"

The plea was a relief to Harry, who then displayed a terrified look after he looked up and met Glenn's eyes.

'He's a monster!' Harry thought.

Glenn didn't reply to Lumen's question. Instead, he observed her silently. Seeming a little bit tired, Glenn was still thinking.

Lumen's face beamed. She was ensured that Glenn had yielded to her requirement on facing her stick and carrot. She did some more thinking, and then she fished and pulled out a high-grade magical stone worth 100,000 regular magical stones.

"If you let Harry go for our team and for Gade himself, this senior magical stone will be your compensation. What do you say?"

Lumen's voice was tender. It was as pleasant as the gentle breeze of spring brushing past, melting the heart of the one who experienced it. Her eyes were somewhat imploring, arousing Glenn's sympathetic emotions.

All of a sudden, Glenn's body trembled slightly at Lumen's remarks. At a point, he thought he was feeling for Lumen and came to terms with Harry. That girl had influenced Glenn's mind. Glenn was both in shock and in admiration of her because of this.

However, in the next second, Glenn's face fell again, although the other two in front of him couldn't see the change.

"Sorry." A dry voice flew from that mask.

Lumen's face changed on hearing this reply, but she returned in

the same gentle manner. "Glenn, what did you say?"

She seemed rather pathetic, as if another word from Glenn, if it was not said in her favor, would break her heart.

"Hum," Glenn snorted coldly, "I said 'sorry'."

That said, Glenn shifted his gaze to Lumen and threatened emotionlessly, "If you kept getting in my way, you will be my enemy, too!"

A fire ball formed on Glenn's hand in a crackling sound.

The fireball caught Harry with a start, whose face then darkened. Almost instantly, he pulled off that escape sorcery reflexively and became a crystal wire, which jumped dozens of meters away. He then scuttled off like a desperate prey.

Glenn ran past Lumen, who had been riveted to the spot, and continued with his chase, without paying attention to her.

The muscles on Lumen's face tightened as she watched the two merging into the thickness of the Bramble forest. After a struggle, she gnashed her teeth and headed for the Black Isotta.

The End Sound Bone dagger was a gift from Varro, who also studied under Glenn's mentor Norris.

Chapter 64: Stray Knights

"Ah!!!"

Harry had been caught in a flame and was bawling miserably in abject pain, which was akin to the howling of the demons from the abyss.. Yet his agonized screaming was not working in reducing the spread of the Inextinguishable Flame launched by Glenn. In the blink of an eye, Harry had been totally drowned in that flame. Instinctively, he fell onto the ground and kept on rolling. The image was reminiscent of an ugly toad struggling in the slime.

"The Ivory Hunting Team will get you for this! Thunder Axe Gade will avenge me!"

Hatred filled Harry's eyes, and he glared down upon Glenn grimly.

But Glenn was not moved by Harry's response at all.

"Why so garrulous?" Glen raised his hand and produced another fire ball, which then whooshed towards Harry.

A violent explosion followed. Afterwards, the whole world turned deadly silent. The raging fire had burned Harry to ashes.

Glenn sneered. Then he got out of the spot in big strides after determining the rough directions using the sun.

.....

Another seven days had passed. Trekking in this forest for over ten days had benefitted Glenn greatly, especially during the past few days when pursuing Harry; he felt as if his body had a huge potential now, and that potential was being explored by the minute. He felt that each and every cell of his body was frolicking as if to lose their excessive, spare energy.

Glen sighed with an affirmative—sorcerers did need to get some field exercise!

Continuing on his road, Glenn soon found himself at a stretch of farmland. It signaled that he had moved out of the bounds of the Bramble Forest, which was under the stewardship of the Black Isotta. In other words, he had now landed in human settlements.

In this case, this travel might require a re-arrangement.

As the thinking was done, Glenn stepped towards a farmer nearest to him.

This farmer bore incredible semblance to Old Sam in his appearance. And when Glenn asked him about the routes, he seemed very flattered to be talking to a sorcerer. He gestured quite a long time to point the way Glenn wanted to go on, and eventually, he offered to lead the way himself. But Glenn didn't let him.

Forging ahead on a dirty road by himself, Glenn's mind was still preoccupied by this mission's priority.

As his mentor Norris had indicated, Glenn's priority in this mission was to build his constitution. There had been students stronger than him dedicated in this mission, so it was not really his place to pioneer this. Besides, all the current work was being conducted for the Demon-Hunting Sorcerers qualification in 15 years.

However, Glenn decided that since this was still an assigned mission, he should at least go to the Town to have a look. It would not be suitable to simply skip this.

After having made this decision, he put some more thought into working out a plan of action.

To figure out an action plan, one might be tempted to know what constituted a Black Sorcerer. There were three types of behaviors that could confirm a sorcerer as a Black one.

First, decimation of ordinary humans in the Sorcerer World to do experiments for evil purposes.

Second, forcibly taking sorcerer students as their Soul Slave.

Third, violation of the fundamental principles governing the interests in the Sorcerer World. And there had been several such sorcerers in history.

Contacting and probing into a Black Sorcerer was dangerous. Hunting one would make it much worse. Although plentiful information had been gathered by his mentor that suggested it was just a sorcerer student who had gone bad, but no one was certainly sure of this.

If the target was a sorcerer, then raiding him rashly would be tantamount to seeking one's death!

Therefore, it was necessary for Glenn to come up with a way of dealing with the situation, and he already had one in his mind—disguising as a stray knight.

Glenn had grown up as a common citizen, and he was familiar with certain rules while living in the city. So after getting familiar with the current roads, he masqueraded himself as a knight. He put on an armor, circled the End Sound dagger around his waist, and then hid away his mask, and his Magical Tools—his earring and necklace etc.

Glenn surveyed himself and concluded that he didn't look fierce enough as a knight. Then he created a scar on his face. By using the Glenn Dissimilation Sorcery, he scarred the left part of his forehead, and the scar extended right down to the downside of his left eye.

After the camouflage was done, Glenn went to a blacksmith who also made weapons.

"I want a large sword, the largest one in your shop. I need it to be very heavy and strong."

Desiring a large and heavy sword was not for killing, though. It was just that Glenn craved his 36 points of constitution to be fully

explored, and carrying weight for a long time was good for building his strength, stamina and vitality.

The air was filled with a pungent smell, and the blacksmith was also reeking of a sour decay of sweat. The stubble on his cheeks was sallow and drops of sweat were dripping from them.

The blacksmith took a glance at Glenn. He did not seem to be good with words. He ripped off the blue, oily apron tied in front of him, exposing his large shoulder and his muscular arm. He then headed off to a back room of the shop and came back with a broad sword, around 1.5 meters long. The sword was dragged by the blacksmith to Glenn, scraping the ground while making a creaking sound.

Glenn took the sword and swished it in the air. The weight felt about right. He was not particular about swords since he was not a martial artist. So he said, satisfied: "That's the one. How much is it?"

Noticing Glenn's ease in sporting such a large sword, the blacksmith was benumbed and his pupils contracted uncontrollably.

"This knight is strong, much stronger than the ones bullying around in the taverns. He'll land a good job working for the nobles, and he might likely become a legend knight someday." These were the blacksmith's thoughts on Glenn.

.....

Regional cities were usually divided into two parts: the area inhabited by the nobles and the commercial area. The area where nobles lived was all about pompous luxury and high-grade elegance, to splash out their money ripped off from servants, slaves and commoners, to show their hefty status, and to slake their growing yanking for more worldly possessions and consumption.

The commercial area was profit-driven and was fraught with violence, disorder and cheap sex.

Bang!

Glenn smashed open the door of a tavern.

In it, stray knights were howling around, drinking malt beers, and spitting; good-figured tavern girls were waggling, making sweet laughs, and drunkards were bragging about their adventures.

This was the theme of a tavern these days.

Glenn had pushed the door open aggressively. This conspicuous move had drawn the attention of the knights in the tavern. Those nights found them in constant danger while working for the nobles. Therefore, when the knights concluded that Glenn was not someone to mess with, those who were teasing around with girls just grunted several times, and the rest resumed what they had been busy with before.

Glenn went for an available seat and sank down casually.

As soon as Glenn had settled himself, a scantily-dressed tavern girl with firm breasts came to Glenn. She seemed a little old for her job here—her skin was not fair, and her face was not pretty as it once was. But she, like the other tavern girls, was incredibly hot. For this reason, these girls had always been the favorites of the knights, who always brimmed with vigor.

The girl leaned and bent in front of Glenn while passing him a glass of inexpensive malt beer. The next second, she threw her upper body on the table, and her huge breasts changed shape when they were strained by the desktop.

The teasing had of course come into his view. He once made a living in Bi Seer City for years. He knew what the rule was.

Glenn pulled out a silver coin and tucked it into the slit between the tavern girl's breasts.

The girl's face beamed, and then, as the knights would do in this situation, Glenn reached out his hand and fondled her breasts.

Meanwhile, in a calm manner, Glenn told the girl to notify him if something related to Pamir Town came up. That said, Glenn pointed to where Pamir Town was roughly located on his map.

The girl was very happy. She then fished for the silver coin stuck between her breasts. Afterwards, she looked at Glenn excitedly. She hadn't met a client who was willing to reward her with a complete silver coin. She was tempted to envision that she might ask him to her room that night if she didn't have other better jobs to do, and thus she might be paid handsomely again. The more important thing was that she thought Glenn was a tough man. The tougher and more ferocious-looking a knight grew, the more manly they would become. This was a standard applied differently when judging a noble.

As for sorcerers, some of them had lost their aesthetic feelings. All they cared about was pivoted around seeking truth, essence and practicality.

However, that tavern girl would soon find her plan with Glenn being his client for the night being thwarted.

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An hourglass later, a short, stout man, with a pair of leather shoes on, pushed open the door of the tavern.

He glanced around this scrubby, bustling place and shouted, displaying a few gold teeth: "Goods to be shipped to Bajaur. Need five good-at-fights hands. Commission is one gold coin."

Usually, the distance from here to Bajaur was merely an over-20-days walk. The stingy kinds of business people would only offer 30 or 40 silver coins for a job like this. So one gold coin was very generous!

"Hire me! With me escorting the goods, these as-revolting-as-a-

mouse thieves and bandits will get out of our way. I'll crush their balls myself." A knight who was smiling with a girl rose up suddenly and gave a roar. He was stripped to the waist, revealing a body as massive as a large bear.

However, this knight was immediately slandered by another knight who flexed his muscles, saying:

"Ha, what the f*ck are you? Don't be cheated by his bloating. Once, he abandoned his hirer when bumping into a gang of robbers. He hasn't been hired in months because of this. He's a pushover, despite his strong appearance."

At the time, that tavern girl who had received Glenn's coin walked leisurely to Glenn again and told him that Bajaur was the nearest city to Pamir, slightly over 5 kilometers east of it.

"F*ck you!" The knight being slandered retorted.

.....

Soon, the tavern had been thrown into a disorder. On every occasion when the commission was handsomely priced, these nights would run into a fierce dogfight. Those who were standing at last would get the job. This was the rule, and this time was no exception.

The girl who was conversing with Glenn screamed suddenly. She had caught sight of a large knight falling towards the table she was at, after he had been knocked over.

Glenn wanted this job so he decided that it was about time to make an exhibition of his power.

After having sensed the right moment, Glenn held out his arm and caught the poor man who was tumbling towards him.

Glenn's move astonished that knight, and as he was panicking, he had found himself being raised up over Glenn's head. He couldn't get rid of Glenn's hand, whose fingers had fixated him like steel loops.

A loud sound was heard, and the next moment, that poor, large man had been thrown out of the tavern's window, creating a parabola in the air before hitting the ground.

This scene drew the attention from the other knights who were engaged in separate fights. Having realized that Glenn was someone not to be trifled with, they intentionally steered out of his way while kept on the fighting.

That girl's eyes beamed on seeing Glenn's valor, so she was enticed to move her body closer to him.

Several moments later, the fights were over. Glenn and four other big, burly men, whose faces were black and blue now, gathered at the tavern's gate before the stout man.

The stout man grinned. "Then this job will be on you guys. Come quick, our girl is gonna run out of patience."

'A girl? So by saying goods to be shipped, he meant a girl.' Glen thought.

Moments later, Glenn and the others had been led by the man to the city gate.

There were four carriages waiting there. Three of them were loaded with mugwort, and there was a non-freight carriage, which looked rather sumptuous.

"Marlinton, are we good to go?" A girl put her head through the window of that carriage. She seemed to be fourteen or fifteen years old and was very impatient. Yet her outfit astounded Glenn and the other stray knights.

"She's wearing a cloak? Is she a sorcerer student?" Glenn said to himself.

Glenn's astonishment was not exactly about her garments. To run into a sorcerer student was common in the Sorcerer World. What had amazed him was the fact that she was hiring knights for her protection.

The degrees of energy a sorcerer's attack could produce were a far cry for the knights to match.

But almost immediately, Glenn had realized something, and his face fell. He was not feeling any magical waves from her! Considering her mental strength, Glenn wouldn't believe that such a little girl could have hidden her magical waves. Putting on a sorcerer cloak before one had magical waves was forbidden and would trigger investigation from LET (Legal Enforcement Team) of the sorcerer school in the jurisdiction. Unless one had been designated as a student by some sorcerer, the punishment resulting from this would be serious.

This was to say that the dignity of a sorcerer was not to be violated.

Chapter 65: A Black Sorcerer

"Hold your head back, Miss!" The stout man was startled and draped the carriage window's curtain at once. Then he turned to Glenn and the other guys and glared at them sternly, inquiring, "Did you see her wearing..."

"Master, there's no need to worry. We didn't see anything," an old knight replied timely.

The chubby man then shifted his gaze to Glenn and the rest, who were spared of possible punishments by also making a pretense of not seeing anything.

Convinced that the threat had been cleared, the rotund man snorted and started driving the carriage fleet out of the city.

"What are you afraid of? On arriving at Bajaur, I'll be an official sorcerer student..." the little girl in the carriage mumbled discontentedly, which was caught by Glenn and the other knights indistinctively.

Glenn fell into a daze on hearing this, wondering if a sorcerer there intended to take her in.

.....

As night fell, the five knights squatted around a bonfire, reveling in drinks and steamed buns while the little girl and the stout man were feasting on some fine food at another bonfire by a carriage.

Those big, tall knights had gotten acquainted with each other after having been together for half a day. And they would stick together for another 20 days for this temporary job. So they began to laugh and bloat together.

The strongest guy among them was nicknamed Violent Bear. His head glowed as he was speaking very highly of himself confronting Black Sorcerers, mutated beasts and others in his adventures. However, these were the most profound things a stray knight

could see or even imagine!

For the remaining group members, one was nicknamed Cobra, who was a malicious-looking man of few words. The other two were twins dubbed Iron Hammer and Iron Axe, respectively. The twins never ceased talking, and both regretted not having met Violent Bear earlier.

As the dining went on, Violent Bear passed across some spirits to Glenn. He frowned initially, but the next second, he gobbled it up. It felt superb!

"Haha, Tyranny. You're a forthright man! This is Tequila, a hometown specialty. It's strong and would get the less heavy drinkers drunk in a whiff." Violent Bear laughed out loud and then resumed munching his dried meat.

Tyranny was Glenn's new nickname. After he had single-handedly flung the large man in the tavern out of the window, he had established his authority and taken Violent Bear's place as the new head of the team!

Glenn didn't reply. Instead, he guzzled another mouthful of tequila. At this time, Glenn had forsaken the social etiquette sorcerers should observe and was gulping meat and alcohol, which would have made Lafite or Robinson's jaws drop.

At the same time, Glenn was pondering on another idea. The Glenn Dissimilation Sorcery had equipped him with an awesome capability in disguising. But exterior transformation would not suffice in actually deluding the enemy. He had to learn to act, and in some sense, acting was a practice of disguise.

Meat and drinks had filled Iron Axe's body, and he commenced chattering. His conversation always hinged on girls and women, and now there was one girl with them, though she was very young.

"Hey, you think the girl by the carriage..."

Undoubtedly, this little girl was clearly not old enough, and

wouldn't have aroused their interest if it was not because of her sorcerer student identity.

"You dumb head! Do you wanna get yourself killed? Who gives you the right to talk about sorcerers?" Iron Hammer scowled at his little brother and hit him hard on the head. Sure enough, Iron Hammer didn't know that the little girl was a sham.

Cobra rose up, but he didn't say anything. Instead, he stepped aside to look for some space to practice some martial arts which were essential for body-building and killing capacity enhancement.

The rest of the group rattled on, and Glenn thought that the talkative Robinson would have made a good partner with them if he had been here.

However, Glenn didn't have any interest in talking. Rather, his eyes brightened when he noticed Cobra drilling his martial arts, which he desired to learn, and which would certainly power his constitution points up. So he went for him.

.....

The carriage fleet proceeded on and encountered no obstructions for more than ten days. Now having being chosen as the head of these knights, he was really behaving that way. He ran to and fro by the fleet, staying alert for potential dangers. The knights lounging in the freight carriage watched this and couldn't refrain from admiring him, although they had no idea that he was just exercising.

Luckily, Glenn's patrol and vigilance had worked and brought some discipline into the team. One day, as Glenn was leading the procession at the forefront, he suddenly raised his hand, and the parade halted.

"What's up, Tyranny?" Violent Bear called out to Glenn, and the stout man in the rear of the procession stuck out his head, trying to figure out what was going on.

"It doesn't feel right," Glenn said drily and calmly, as if he was an old knight who had been seasoned in plenty of deadly battles. "The forest ahead of us teems with wild woods and there are no cities in the vicinity, which make it a perfect ambush site for the robbers."

Iron Hammer and Violent Bear ran to Glenn, frowning. "Based on past experiences, no gang of robbers stalks here. Are you sure about this, Tyranny?"

Glenn nodded, although he wouldn't tell him that it was his enhanced hunting nose that had helped him detect a gang of robbers lurking in the forest.

Soon, before Glenn's knight team had explored the way, the gang of robbers had shown themselves from the forest. There were 14 of them, and they quickly besieged the fleet.

Holding weapons firmly in hand, Glenn and the other knights glared at the robbers fiercely. However, both sides refrained from initiating a battle.

The stout man walked out of his carriage, smiling deferentially to the head of the robbers, and then he threw a bag of silver coins at him. "Use this money to buy some drinks for your guys. Please let us go."

There was an unwritten rule between robbers and stray knights. If the stray knights hadn't been hired by the business people, then the knights who had run into such incidents had no responsibility of protecting the business people, and if they had been hired and a possible strife would cost dearly, then the employer would get some money out of their pockets to bribe the robbers.

The head robber gave the money bag a lift, took a glance at the stray knights and then shook his head. "I would have made way for you, but today is not your lucky day, someone wants you. So..."

Afterwards, the head robber waved his hand, and over ten robbers behind him closed in on the fleet, making queer laughs.

The stout man was taken aback. He had lost his reason and was simply gazing at the head robber.

"F*ck you, b*tch! Thinking we are useless? I'll smash you." Violent Bear came towards the head robber with his axe, and the other three knights in Glenn's camp were also enraged, their eyes turning red. Noticeably, a sense of justice in the knights' heart had been triggered by the rule-bending robbers, and they had gotten ready to fight till death, but only after taking several lives of the other camp.

Finally, the two camps were engaged, and very soon, as a strand of blood spurted into the air, the fight came to a standstill. All people on the spot directed their eyes towards the large, blood-dripping sword.

"Ah!!!" A miserable scream was heard, and the head robber had been greatly shortened. His sword had been broken in two, and his body had been severed in half from the waist.

The head robber's body from above the waist fell onto the ground. It then crawled backwards as if to try to escape from this demon in front, leaving a stretch of strewn viscera and blood stains. It was a gruesome scene.

Glenn was benumbed.

He had seen the head robber charging at him and since he knew a little about martial arts, he instinctively chopped his sword at the incoming enemy's head.

The head robber had concluded that Glenn was just a rookie knight while rushing at him, so he didn't take Glenn's sword move seriously. He had even thought of the next move against Glenn if Glenn could have taken his first chop. The head robber had slaughtered countless rookies like Glenn.

However, the instant Glenn's huge, thrust sword met the head robber's, the robber's sword snapped. The strong force left in

Glenn's sword, after having cutting in half the enemy's sword, then sliced his body. The head robber's pupils dilated, and he still couldn't believe what had happened to him.

What had gone through Glenn and the head robber's mind was in no way known to the others. However, they did know that Glenn sliced the head robber with a casual wave of his sword.

"You...this...Tyranny...this..." stuttered Violent Bear. And the bald knight had even developed some sympathy with the crawling robber, and became hesitant whether to axe the stupefied rest of the other camp, and so did the other members of Glenn's camp, who didn't expect such an improvement of situation in their favor.

Even Glenn himself was not sure of what to do next. He had expected to carry on the fighting with the robbers to further build his constitution. Since Glenn had cultivated the dissimulation sorcery, as long as he was not beheaded, everything would be just fine.

But it seemed that the field exercise had worked, and his strength had been enhanced to a level much higher than an ordinary knight. He had "accidentally" caused a heavy casualty.

Glenn stroked his nose, looking hesitant about whether to kill the remaining robbers.

"A legend knight! He's a legend knight!" A terrified, shaking voice broke amid the robbers, and the speaker then pointed to Glenn.

This seemed to be the only explanation to Glenn butchering a head robber without much effort!

The knights around Glenn stared at him adoringly, and Cobra who had remained silent finally said something, eyes glittering. "Are you really a legend knight?"

Legend knights were humans whose physical capabilities had been elevated to their limits and could bring out their strength deriving from their blood essence. With this strength, legend

knights would offer to serve some sorcerers. Once rebuilt by their master, their strength might be reinforced further, and they might become a really strong knight, yet this seemed a desperate dead end!

"Um...you may call me that," Glenn pretended and owned to it, thinking that the party would break on arriving at Bajaur and their life would never cross afterwards.

Glenn's confession confirmed the conjecture harbored by the robbers and the knights alike, who were still staggered by this answer.

Legend knights were a rare species. They were even scarcer than sorcerers! Becoming one was the life-time pursuit for innumerable knights.

"Haha, a legend knight? Wonderful!" A queer, evil voice flew out from behind the robbers, and accompanying the voice, a stranger came into view.

"A Black Sorcerer?!" The knights convoying the fleet yelled, unwilling to believe what they were witnessing.

A Black Sorcerer had one characteristic that distinguished them most. Their body was constantly shrouded in a gray dark aura because they had killed too many humans and absorbed a mysterious force from them. The force was said to be a negative energy representing thrilled, desperate and pathetic howling for justice. It was said that only the Holy Tower could conceal such negative energy totally, and thus the Black Sorcerers it nurtured were not real Black sorcerers and were called the Demon-Hunting sorcerers.

The Black Sorcerer in front of the crowd was around 16 or 17 years old and had a tender face. However, no one on the spot seemed to have an opinion about this fact because they were all consumed by terror. Meeting a Black Sorcerer equaled death for ordinary humans in this Sorcerer World.

"Wait!" At the time, the little girl came out of the carriage and dashed anxiously towards Glenn and the Black Sorcerer, holding a black, weird-looking card in her hand.

The Black Sorcerer was thrown into a trance on seeing the card. Meanwhile, Glenn was shocked as well.

"This Black Sorcerer seems rather weak! I can hide my magical waves from him even though I only have 30 points of mental strength. He can't recognize me as a sorcerer student! What is wrong with the Sorcerer World? Why is such a weak Black Sorcerer walking around freely?"

Glenn studied this Black Sorcerer who emerged from nowhere as if he was faced with a rare species.

‘Maybe I should preserve him as a specimen.’ Glenn thought. ‘But will I be hunted by other Black Sorcerers? Or I can just kill him and bring his head back to my mentor, then this job will be finished. This is a Black Sorcerer!’

Chapter 66: Weirdness

"You are also invited?" The Black Sorcerer looked at the little girl, and it took several moments before he finally uttered something.

Glenn heard this and was quickly analyzing this piece of information

'Is this Bajaur a stronghold of Black Sorcerers or something?' This analysis startled Glenn. "This is ridiculous!"

The little girl got relieved on seeing the Black Sorcerer recognize the card in her hand. With the corner of her mouth flicked up, she then said, "Then please get your men out of the way."

The Black Sorcerer pondered for a moment, and then his young face sneered. "I'll let you go and also your knights, since they'll run some errands for you once you become one of us." He paused for a while before he locked Glenn with his eyes and said, "But I'd like to take him. With such a powerful posse working for me, it's gonna spare me many troubles."

The Black Sorcerer kept his greedy eyes on Glenn as if Glenn was a treasure he desired to possess.

Goosebumps spread all over Glenn who was being watched by this disgusting nuisance. Glenn would have stopped the disguise thing and ended this Black Sorcerer's life if it were not for that possible big secret that involved him.

Usually, a sorcerer wouldn't have tolerated such an insult to his face by a less powerful sorcerer.

'On some other occasion, I'll definitely kill him, and do it in a more cruel way,' thought Glenn relentlessly.

"No way! I hired him. He's my private property. You don't have rights to claim him." The little girl talked back after having realized that Glenn was a legend knight who might be able to help her in her evil courses.

Confusion took over Glenn at the time. It was said that Black Sorcerers would make an effort in trying not to expose their identity or their whereabouts, and for that reason, people they encountered would all be annihilated. Then, since when did they need helping hands?

‘Did they break from their traditional type of Black Sorcerers and formed a new school?’ thought Glenn .

The Black Sorcerer didn’t take the girl’s request seriously and enunciated clearly, "It’s not a discussion! Did you know what rules the relationship between Black Sorcerers or not?"

The Black Sorcerer’s tender face showed a gloomy, evil smile as if to give an impression that he really belonged to the type.

"You..." The little girl stuttered as she had become a little bit scared by this. She didn’t reply, but looked at Glenn pitifully and then stomped on the ground. "Let’s go!" She waved to her knights except for Glenn.

"Wait!" the Black Sorcerer yelled.

"What? Do you want more? Don’t push it too far. I’m also one of those who have been invited by that master!"

The girl’s temper was ignited, and she howled.

"What a dolly you are!" The Black Sorcerer said spitefully, and then he continued, "Now that they know how we are related, they’ll kill you half-way to Bajaur."

"No-no. That’s so not gonna happen. We heard nothing about your relationship."

Violent Bear and the other knights argued for themselves immediately, their faces looking ghastly pale. At this time, they had to take extreme care when speaking or their lives might be lost.

The little girl couldn’t help but turn her eyes to the knights,

seemingly torn about what to do next. "Then what am I supposed to do? Without them, I..."

"Hey, you knights! Take the pills or you won't leave here alive!" The Black Sorcerer took out a few pills and dumped them on the ground in front of the knights.

Violent Bear was the first amidst the knights to make a move. He picked up a pill in front of him, gnashed his teeth and threw it into his mouth. The other knights followed suit under the Black Sorcerer's duress.

The knights looked terrible. They seemed to have resigned themselves to destiny. Then, almost simultaneously, they shifted their attention to Glenn, with empathy in their eyes, thinking, "We've taken the pills as asked. Although we must follow exact orders from now on, but one upside about this is that we're safe for now. But Glenn is a legend knight. God knows what would befall him."

However, Glenn was rejoicing.

"Tracking this little girl could also help me get some hints about that Bajaur place. Then why not get rid of this abhorrent Black Sorcerer right now?"

But now, as a legend knight facing a Black Sorcerer, Glenn's first reaction should be to make a run for it.

The next second, Glenn shouted and scampered off like a scared rabbit, leaving this mess behind him.

"Ha, poor lamb. You run away as you like, but you'll be at my service willingly sooner or later!" The Black Sorcerer got excited abnormally, and even his cheeks flushed.

This was a perverted, conceited and avaricious reaction when obtaining a sudden increase in power. Seeing those overbearing living things suddenly flee like prey was joyous, so was the obsession with having this power.

In a whoosh, the Black Sorcerer dashed after Glenn at a very high speed. He seemed to have good constitution!

The fleeing and the chasing had continued for one and half hourglass yet it ended up with nothing. The Black Sorcerer seemed to have gotten tired of this boring game. Out of the blue, a strand of black mist poured from beneath his feet, and the next second, he had run ahead of Glenn.

"Little lamb, it's getting boring. Why don't you just behave yourself and be my servant?" The Black Sorcerer's callow face laughed, as if to say that he would be standing atop the Sorcerer Continent and looking down everything in the future.

Glenn skewed his mouth scornfully and said, "Black Sorcerers are all as weak as you?"

Glenn couldn't even conceive a proper word to describe this Black Sorcerer, who was just like the young, arrogant, and stupid students newly admitted to sorcerer schools.

The scorn on Glenn's face made the Black Sorcerer's face fall. The Black Sorcerer's excitement cooled down, and he stared down on Glenn. "You brainless legend knight! You've pissed off your master. I'm gonna slap you a hundred times."

"I've had enough of this farce. You're so disgusting. It's about time to end this."

Glenn was caught in this both funny and exasperating matter, and he had no more intention to hear his nonsense.

Since the girl could also lead Glenn to some hints related to Bajaur, this Black Sorcerer was of little use beyond serving as an experimental specimen, but his head alone would suffice. It would be much trouble to bring his whole body back to the Black Isotta. It would be better to focus more on constitution building.

As Glenn was thinking about this, a fireball slowly appeared on his finger tip, which freaked the Black Sorcerer.

Glenn laughed grimly. "It's my first time killing a Black Sorcerer, which is kind of thrilling."

"No! How is that possible? The fireball..."

A huge explosion erupted. And then a flame engulfed this weak Black Sorcerer. Because the fire ball's attack degree was too high, and he didn't even have the chance to scream before he died.

In a second, only the lone head of that Black Sorcerer was left in this clearing, and Glenn became exhilarated with his control over the fire element sorcery.

Pondering on how to deal with this head, Glenn decided to bury it.

"This head is not gonna decay soon. His constitution is not bad! Then I'll take it on my way back to the school. As for now, I think I'll just head straight to Bajaur and get information from Violent Bear after they arrive there. This is the safest way."

Glenn pulled off the Glenn Dissimilation Sorcery again and made the scar on his face disappear. Afterwards, he went off to Bajaur as a stray knight.

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Ten days later, Bethany and Ryan met Glenn on a wild field. They recognized him the moment Glenn came into view despite his outfit belonging to knights. His mask was very distinctive.

As they came to Glenn and greeted him, they didn't ask about Harry, which they thought would be unwise. There would be only two explanations for his absence—either he was killed by Glenn or fled back to the school after being defeated and then would live a debased life with a stigma.

They weren't expecting Glenn to be able to actually do something. They thought Glenn had been taking on Harry on impulse, and now they were re-evaluating who this man was. However, Glenn might have been bumped onto the hit list of the

Four Best.

"How's the mission going?" asked Glenn, with the cold air he always wore.

Ryan shrugged. "It's done. But those guys grabbed our reward. There were four of them. Bethany and I couldn't take it back."

"Hum! Who'd know that the Black Sorcerer was so weak! He was no better than the newly admitted students to the sorcerer schools! It has been a complete waste of time on my part to look into him." Bethany's hand hammered onto the earth, and made a cavity in it.

Glenn's pupils contracted on seeing this.

"It's indeed a pity. We were too careful. If we'd been a little bit more determined...He was such a powerless Black Sorcerer!" Ryan finished the sentence and took a glance at Glenn, begrudgingly. "If you could've taken care of that guy and come earlier to hold back that Christina from the Ivory Castle, Bethany and I may have succeeded taking back that Black Sorcerer's head."

Christina? One of the Desperators in the First-Years Sorcery Test?

The name 'Christina' rang a bell in Glenn's head.

"Why do you care about this? Those four guys must have already taken the head back to their school!" Bethany seemed very frustrated, though she was not blaming Glenn for the poor result. She thought that beating a callow guy like Harry guy must have been difficult for Glenn. However, she didn't know that Glenn tarried and was late for days on the way here just to build his constitution.

"Just forget it. Luck hasn't been with us these days. Glenn, we're planning to return to the school. Are you?" Ryan's patience seemed to have run out. This mission had really disappointed him.

"I'm thinking about going to the mission site," said Glenn lightly.

Bethany and Ryan decided otherwise, so they parted ways with Glenn.

Glenn watched them disappear into the distance. Something in his mind was seething.

Why was the Black Sorcerer they were tasked to pursue so weak? And why was the one he met also enfeebled?

Was this a coincidence? Or was there a secret behind it?

There probably existed a secret in Bajaur!

Chapter 67: The Devil Lord

The Black Isotta School of Sorcerers was located in the 12th section of the Seven Rings Holy Tower, and Bajaur was on the border of the Ivory Castle School of Sorcerers. It was a big, well-known city whose importance equaled those established harbor cities. Besides, Bajaur was open and inclusive, with merchants, knights and adventurers coming from many places.

On the Sorcerer Continent, black sorcerers usually abounded in two types of places. One was those areas where people rarely visited. The other was where two spheres of territories overlapped. Black sorcerers favored the latter because varied sorts of people co-existed there and most nobles were descendants of different branches of sorcerers, with many past disputes unresolved.

Glenn had arrived at Bajaur many days ago. Sitting in a tavern as straight as a sculpture, he watched the streams of people passing by while sipping the good wine in his hand now and then.

This was not a low-grade tavern where stray knights frequented. And the room Glenn had ordered was a tasteful, private one where few people came to inquire about things.

All of a sudden, Glenn gazed out. "They're going out of the house." He then rose up after putting down the wine glass on the table, and stared at the familiar faces on the street.

The familiar faces were Violent Bear, and the other knights hired by the little girl, and three more people seemed to have joined them. Those seven knights were convoying the luxury carriage towards the city gate.

Glenn had been waiting in this tavern for 20 days, and he found them entering Bajaur only three days ago, but he had been very careful in not exposing himself. If there was indeed a stronghold of black sorcerers, then it would be as dangerous as a sheep running into a herd of wolves.

However, Glenn had been assured that the little girl's knights were not facing any dangers these days, so he had conceived an idea.

Glenn snickered. Then he twisted his face, which then looked very different. Afterwards, he left the tavern unhurriedly and tracked the carriage.

Taking advantage of his hunting nose, Glenn could track this carriage from several hundred meters away. Thus, in no way would the knights detect him.

"I'm gonna find out what exactly they are doing!"

Glenn had been following the fleet for several days, and the trip had been quite smooth. However, on the fifth day, using his nose, Glenn had detected that the procession stopped marching suddenly, and it remained at the original site for half a day.

Glenn moved stealthily towards the fleet.

"Ah—You robbers!!!" A desperate cry was heard.

On hearing the sound, Glenn stretched his head out of a ditch on a village's farm land, and just caught sight of Cobra killing a peasant woman. He seemed to have become frenzied and then slaughtered the baby wailing in the dead woman's arms without blinking an eye.

'What's going on? Black sorcerers need civilians alive for the experiments, then why is this guy killing them?' Glenn thought.

After living several years of sorcerer life, Glenn had become unsympathetic. However, he still got angry on seeing such a murder. They didn't have a purpose in mind and were just killing for killing! If they were catching civilians in large numbers for their experiments, Glenn would disapprove because of his standing point as a "sorcerer", but he could understand. Killing innocent people? That enraged him!

The Sorcerer World was founded on ordinary people, without

whom there would be no new sorcerer students.

In his wrath, Glenn noticed something incredible.

Cobra had pulled out something similar to a black stone and shook it before the dead mother and her child. Then, an esoteric energy wave appeared in it.

"This energy wave should be soul wave! But why is Cobra collecting them?" Glenn rasped, expecting something big to happen.

Normally, a knight being able to gather soul waves made little sense. Even for a sorcerer student like Glenn, his use on soul waves was very primitive.

"Cobra, how many souls have you got?"

At the time, Glenn saw that little girl walk out her carriage. To his great surprise, this ordinary human was now shrouded by a gray aura of negative life information, which belonged exclusively to black sorcerers.

Glenn simply couldn't believe what he was witnessing.

"She has become a black sorcerer in such a short span of time? That's impossible! Sorcerers have to build knowledge to become stronger. This is applicable to any sorcerers in everywhere. Power comes from knowledge!"

Glenn kept trying to make his case, yet he was still stunned by this fact presented by the girl.

All at once, a thought struck Glenn. 'Could it be that this little girl is like the Black Sorcerer I killed before? They just resort to some negative energy to build constitution and wield the gained energy in a simpler way? They definitely couldn't lever up their 'sorcery' as sorcerers do, too. If that was true, I'd crush them even if they came in hundreds.'

Actually, the power of leverage mattered. Without it, Glenn's

attack power would be limited within 10 degrees, allowing for his current level of mental strength and magical force.

Black sorcerers might be able to work some magic with the negative energy and improve constitution. But their maximum offensive power would be bounded at around 20 degrees, and what they could achieve in the future would also be limited, at least according to the real sorcerers in the Sorcerer World.

But, what forces sped up their power, exactly? A real black sorcerer? This question baffled Glenn's mind, yet soon, he ruled out the possibility that a black sorcerer was behind it.

Black sorcerers were bent on sitting on top of the food chain by killing and seeking the truth governing life and death. They wouldn't bother to reach such a boring, short-sighted girl. As for human souls collecting, a much more reliable and efficient way would be to pull off some sorcery and decimate people in large stretches in a city, like the East Coral Island where Glenn's hometown was located.

Glenn was still puzzled about that "master" who had created this little girl and the others, but whoever it was, it wouldn't be a real sorcerer.

'Degenerated as they are, black sorcerers are basically an elite group who don't lack intelligence. This little girl is definitely not their intellectual work.' Glenn thought.

Thinking about this, Glenn took a breath of relief. "Whoever created these weird 'Black Sorcerers', they were not very wise."

In the Sorcerer World, lack of high intelligence meant weak power, so Glenn had nothing to worry about. In fact, if Glenn had focused on developing some followers and had trained them, (although there might not be many due to restrictions of time, energy, and resources), he would certainly be faring better than these lame black sorcerers.

During the time when Glenn was lost in thought, the little girl had led Violent Bear, Cobra and the other knights out of this village, leaving the cold, dead bodies behind them.

Glenn proceeded to track the fleet like a ghost stalking in the dark.

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Four days later in another village, the slaughter went on. But this time, Glenn approached them quietly. He came directly to Cobra and dealt with him!

Glenn had decided to target Cobra back in the tavern. He seldom spoke and thus was less likely to be debunked.

Now Glenn had become Cobra and was playing with the black stone in his hand, which he had no idea about. But he could feel the soul waves in it and estimated that there were no less than ten.

Before a student succeeded in upgrading to a sorcerer, his/her soul was not different from ordinary people. So, technically, the stone contained ten of Glenn's souls.

"Cobra, how many souls have you got?" The little girl approached "Cobra" excitedly, with her hands coated in blood.

Glenn took a glance at the stone and said, "Thirteen, Miss."

The little girl was not very familiar with "Cobra", so Glenn was able to deceive her by mimicking Cobra's voice and tone.

The girl pondered a while and then jumped joyously, as if she were a little girl that had received a candy.

"Wonderful! Including yours, we've raked up 100 souls in total. Now we can go to the Devil Lord, who'll realize my wish and hide this gray cloud around me. And next time, I'll collect 500 souls and become a stronger sorcerer student."

Glenn laughed at her in his mind. "What a nice dream. In the absence of the power of leverage, what kind of a sorcerer student

would you be? But who's this Devil Lord? Could it be an ancient sorcerer?"

"Lord" was a word repugnant to sorcerers, since it stood for superstition, ignorance, and benightedness. No sorcerer would like it if his/her nickname ended with the word "Lord", even those conceited, unenlightened type. Besides, being nicknamed "Lord", his power level should be high. Then, why was he asking those who were not even students to collect souls?

This was strange!

Still disguised as Cobra, Glenn went back to Bajaur along with the procession, and during the trip, nobody became suspicious of his identity.

Now the group had arrived at an expansive manor of a noble in Bajaur. The security was tight, with many knights covering important positions. After having been examined and allowed to pass at several positions, they were led to an underground lobby.

Two "Black Sorcerers" were guarding there. Glenn squinted and found that these two were much stronger than the little girl—their attack power should be over 30 points, an estimation Glenn made on the premise of no leverage power.

However, these "Black Sorcerers" didn't seem to have magical force, which was exclusive to sorcerers, let alone the ability to lever up sorcery. What they could pull off was a crude use of their enhanced constitution and negative energy, a raw power application according to real sorcerers.

"Stop! The Devil Lord is meeting other disciples." One of the "Black Sorcerers" stopped Glenn and the others. The little girl said nothing and waited where they were as ordered.

A short while later, a male "Black Sorcerer" who was 14 or 15 years old came out. Negative energy was coming off from him, which was nearly as strong as the two guardians.

Excitement and frenzy filled the eyes of this "Black Sorcerer" who was like a little wolf that had just learned how to drink blood. He then led several sturdy knights behind him out of the hall without casting a glance at Glenn, the little girl and the others.

"Let's get inside," said the little girl indignantly; she seemed to have been irritated by the boy's arrogance.

In a grand palace, an over-ten-meter mirror appeared before the group like a watery screen. In its thin space, there was a mysterious, unknown energy wave, which gave a feeling that this place was a wormhole bordering the Sorcerer World.

In the palace were varied arcane energy waves, most of which were unknown to Glenn. Roughly, he could discern out twisted space waves, negative energy waves, soul waves, void waves, and others.

"My disciple, what do you want and what are you giving me for that?"

A calm, serious and deep voice came out from the mirror, which startled Glenn.

Afterwards, a huge ball of black fire appeared in the mirror, and in it, two smaller balls of blue fire shone like a pair of eyes, as if they could look into ones' soul. It was this ball of fire that was talking to the little girl in non-standard sorcerer language. It was an irregular element creature!

Chapter 68: A Hoax

Bump!

The little girl kneeled suddenly, followed by Violent Bear and the other knights. Glenn had disguised himself as Cobra, so he also dropped to his knees.

"Devil Lord. I'd like to give you 100 souls in the hope that you'll pull off your sorcery and conceal my energy waves. This way, your most loyal servant would be able to collect more souls," the little girl stuttered in a respectful voice as if to say she'd dedicate everything to the Devil Lord. Afterwards, the girl threw the several black stones she had gathered into the mirror.

The mirror rippled like fluid mercury, and ten minutes later, these stones had merged into it.

"Nice tribute! Your wish will be realized then!" The Devil Lord sounded delighted.

As the Lord's voice died away, a pure, wondrous energy appeared around the little girl and started flowing into her body slowly.

The girl became ecstatic and intoxicated. She couldn't help but murmur something, her face blushing.

A short while later, the negative energy circling the girl had been hidden, at least hidden perfectly in the eyes of Glenn, who was a sorcerer student.

"Thank you Devil Lord for such a generous award!"

The girl looked down, and confirmed the absence of her negative energy. She then kneeled again before the Devil Lord in the mirror.

As Glenn followed suit and fell on his knees again, he was quickly analyzing what this so-called Devil Lord was.

Actually, he was just a creature residing on a foreign land.

Through some unknown means, he had connected to the Sorcerer World and had been instigating these innocent children here to collect human souls, which seemed to be the unique properties of the Sorcerer World to him.

This scene reminded Glenn of a legendary novel he had once read in his childhood.

In the book, these devils seduced humans to commit sins by promising them great power in return; these humans ended up with their souls being eaten by the devils. And the process involved the important 'Devil Pact'.

At the time, Glenn felt perplexed about what to do next. He thought:

'This foreign land creature is powerful to have imposed his will on the Sorcerer World. But this will transfer has been hindered somewhat by world's physical forces, and it's hard for him to even pick up a few stones. Apparently, this Devil's projected will can't exercise much power, neither can the black sorcerer guards. Then, should I do something now?'

Glenn hesitated for a long time and finally gave up on this idea.

On one hand, it was Glenn's first time encountering a foreign land creature carrying out his will in the Sorcerer World, the process of which he had little knowledge about. So, rash actions would not be suggested since it was unclear how the Lord had achieved this transfer.

On the other, what would Glenn get even if he targeted the Devil Lord? What he would gain might be negatively proportioned to what he would have to pay.

In effect, Glenn had a better choice to go with. He had decided to leave this complex matter to his mentor Norris after returning to Black Isotta. This, in his opinion, was beyond a student's ability to deal with!

Having thought about this, Glenn caught up to the little girl, who was on her way out of the hall.

Suddenly, something happened.

"Wait!"

Devil Lord in the mirror made a strange sound. The group turned about and found his blue eyes were glowing brighter and were dwelling on "Cobra". He seemed to have discovered something special in him.

"You! Yes, you! Your soul's life information is different. Come closer!" In his rapturous voice, Devil Lord urged Glenn to come forward to him.

"Me?" replied Glenn with astonishment.

"Hurry up, go!" The little girl looked excited and urged, "The Devil Lord wants you. This is an honor thousands of people have been crying for!"

The girl pushed the already stunned "Cobra" forward, and Glenn was now facing the mirror less than a meter away.

A deafening sound was heard as if a fire had gone off and then it went silent. A short while later, a delighted voice said, "A fantastic soul! A great soul!"

The Devil Lord then continued his murmuring with the kind of excitement that could only be seen when a gourmet had tasted some rare delicacy or a lecher had come across a gorgeous beauty.

Meanwhile, amazement filled Glenn's eyes. He seemed to have discovered something special about Devil Lord, too. Desires were burning in Glenn's mind, and even with his ability to conceal feelings, his face was displaying great possessiveness.

"A motivator! It would work perfectly to activate my Fire Element Sorcery Matrix. It matches so wonderfully. This is simply a miracle! I'm gonna get it from this foreign land creature. I'm

definitely gonna get it!" Glenn had gone frenzied. For him, this creature was now a treasure!

If it had not been the fact that Glenn didn't have sufficient power, he'd absolutely capture this element creature right now and throw him into his lab at all costs, even if the cost would be to invade this creature's world.

The next moment, these two people who harbored evil ideas exchanged eye contact.

The Devil Lord initiated a conversation. "Are you craving for greater power? With it, you could readily destroy those who have bullied you!"

Glenn was exalted on hearing this. It was the exact words that had been used by the devils in the book to seduce people, and now it was being used in reality.

Bump!

Glenn prostrated on the ground. He then crawled slowly towards the screen, displaying repulsive desires and yearning on his face, as the loyal servants depicted in the biographical novels would do.

As Glenn had arrived at the mirror, he cried, "I am! I want power! I do. Dear Devil Lord, can you teach me how to gain great power?"

Glenn's mimicry was vivid. He looked a lot like the novel heroes who were mad about greater power.

The Devil Lord seemed to have expected this, and his soul waved pleasantly.

"Give me your soul when you die, and I will pass on to you the great power! My disciples tell me that your world is ruled by a class composed of arrogant sorcerers, isn't it? I don't know how exactly their power is graded, but the power I'm giving you is no weaker than the power of a corresponding sorcerer level."

The Devil Lord continued with his seduction.

"No weaker than sorcerers' power level? Knowing so little about the Sorcerer World? Fearless is indeed based on ignorance!" Glenn became relieved now.

Glenn maintained his debased expressions and said gratefully, "What's the use of my soul if I'm dead? I'm willing to give you my soul, but how can I deliver it to you?"

Glenn kept on his longing, excited expressions, and a voice was roaring in his head. "Say the Devil Pact! Say the words!"

"You'll be all set once you sign the Devil Pact." A thrilled voice came off from the screen.

Glenn was contented on hearing the Devil Lord say the word "pact" as he had expected.

For the next half an hourglass, the mirror was in a constant flux, like flowing mercury. A leather paper belonging to some unknown creature was squeezing its way out of the mirror, and it should be the Devil Pact depicted in those legendary stories.

In biographical novels, all signers of the Devil Pact would gain great power in a short period of time, but would end up with horrible deaths, and after that, their souls would be served as food for these devils.

All in all, this pact was a miraculous, yet cursed item, and had been commonly used by the villains.

The moment this pact finally broke off from the mirror, Glenn caught sight of a ball of black flame throbbing on it. Glenn guessed that it was its blood, tantamount to humans'.

"Sign this pact, and you'll..."

Before the Devil Lord had finished talking, a loud sound thundered, and immediately, sounds of glass shattering were heard at every corner of the hall.

Everybody—the little girl, the knights, and the guards who had

come to check what was going on— were all shocked to their very core. The next moment, they rubbed their eyes and squinted at the broken pieces of the huge mirror.

They then shifted their gaze to Glenn. They had no idea why this lucky guy—being favored by Devil Lord—would do such a thing as break the mirror. At one point, they thought they had been under an illusion.

Glenn retracted his fist and picked up the pack on the ground.

At this time, a strong energy wave came off from the shattered pieces, and then, an angry voice thundered, "What have you done?! Don't you want power?!"

Glenn snorted. "You stupid foreign land creature! You know nothing about sorcerers' power! How dare you collect innocent humans' souls in the Sorcerer World! I'll report this to my mentor!"

"You sinister, insidious human! You've just deceived the Dark Flame Lord! I've memorized your soul's life information and the coordinates of your world. I'll invade it and find you. Your soul would be then enclosed in the foul, squalid pig's belly forever. And I'll..."

The Dark Flame Lord's roar coming from the broken mirror was discontinued suddenly. Without the mirror, his will transfer couldn't be sustained for long.

"An invasion against the Sorcerer World?" Glenn laughed boisterously, wondering which remote place did this ignorant fool come from.

In the bigger, endless world, there should be civilizations capable of invading the Sorcerer World. However, it had merely encountered two civilizations in its history, let alone one that was powerful enough to invade!

Since this Lord was able to project his will onto the Sorcerer

World, it could be concluded that his world was not that far away. But there were definitely no other civilizations around the Sorcerer World. Otherwise, there would be no peace.

Besides, the Sorcerer World was always the initiator of an invasion, not vice versa!

However, the Dark Flame Lord's remarks did remind Glenn of something. He picked up a piece of the broken glass and stuck it into his robe.

'Perhaps, his world's coordinates might have been recorded in this,' Glenn thought.

With a loud crash, Glenn had produced the Inextinguishable Flame for his protection and rushed out of this underground palace.

The constitution-building mission was now over.

Chapter 69: The Legal Enforcement Team

On his way to the Black Isotta, Glenn chose to walk to get more exercise, and for this purpose, he walked very fast.

With the mask on his face, Glenn raced on the road, carrying the large sword and also a sack. In it were the heads belonging to three black sorcerers.

"Upon arriving at the school, how would Norris reward me for killing three black sorcerers?" Glenn snickered expectantly. "Oh, stop thinking about the reward. I had this wonderful experience and gained knowledge. That's more important."

...

Twenty days later in the Bramble Forest.

At night that day, the lights pouring down from the moon and the stars had been thinned out by the dark clouds. Glenn was sitting atop a giant tree and was feeling the texts in the Devil Pact with his soul using the flash produced by his Flame.

"What magical words! They introduce a way to interpret meaning using souls! They seem to be the natural product of soul waves and might be helpful in learning how to use souls."

While saying this, Glenn noticed the small, black fireball at the bottom of the pact again. It had no temperature and didn't glow.

Glenn reached his hand out and touched it gently. It felt like a burning liquid. He then thought:

'This motivator is beautiful. At first sight, my soul responded to it! There's so much potential waiting to be explored in it. We'll see what will be created the moment the fire element sorcery is activated using this motivator.'

After having read through the pact, Glenn fished for that glass piece he had picked up when the huge mirror fell apart.

Glenn studied it attentively, yet it turned out to be an ordinary glass piece glazed with a layer of metal.

Glenn sighed, doubting both its uniqueness and his depth of knowledge.

Further study on it was also fruitless, so Glenn set it aside and pulled out his crystal ball.

Mental Strength: 30 points.

Magical Force: 285 ~ 310 points.

Constitution: 36 points.

Stamina: 189 ~ 190 points.

Strength: 91 ~ 294 points.

Activity: 162 ~ 296 points.

Glenn read his achievements made these past few days on the crystal ball and mumbled:

"Over two months have passed. Despite the fact that the 36-point constitution is far from being fully exploited, there have been some improvements in basic constitution properties."

Concerning enhanced stamina, its benefits had been evidently felt. Glenn could work longer without feeling fatigued, and while at work, he was always galvanized and his senses were keener. Also, he had a very good appetite.

Admittedly, boosted constitution would not directly lead to better battle strength. However, this would serve as a power-increase accelerator because it could bring about more energy, more focused concentration and higher efficiency in knowledge acquirement.

On strength, Glenn's current measurement of 91~294 points represented a substantial improvement from his previous 35~120 points. However, the strength calculating method differed greatly from how the magical force offensive power (element sorceries)

was measured. For Glenn, the attack degree depending on his pure strength lied merely between 9 and 30 degrees.

Besides, strength was hard to elevate by a large margin. After long-term research by underground sorcerers, capabilities related to strength had been leveraged up, but the leverage power was limited, which usually increase the sorceries by one, three or five times, and thus couldn't match the leverage power of element sorceries, which could do it by several times, by scores of times and even by several hundreds of times.

However, constitution building had its own uses.

Element sorcery students had mental strength which was bounded at 40, a ceiling that couldn't be broken unless he/she became an official sorcerer. But there was no such thing restricting constitution building, which was a passive evolution.

Underworld dragon-based sorcerers were roughly ranked, and the ranking was made by comparing their average battle strength with the with the hierarchic system for element sorcerers.

For example, a foreign land creature with excellent constitution might be equivalent to a sorcerer between level 2 and level 3, which technically qualified it as a sorcerer who was worse than a level 3 and better than a level 2. However, for element sorcerers, the gap between the two levels was huge.

This was the upside of constitution enhancement—there was no ceiling and no distinct ranks.

In the underground world, 250 points offensive power would qualify one as an official sorcerer, which should be based on 80 to 100 points constitution. But one wouldn't be qualified even if one point was subtracted.

Most living beings in the universe progressed through the passive evolution of constitution strengthening, and and because of this evolution, the Sorcerer World reigned over others.

Concerning Glenn's 162~396 points activity now, it was a sharp rise relative to the 110~157 points prior to the practice these days, but the attack power he could withstand was only 16~29 points, the lowest points of Glenn's Ashen Mask defense power.

In conclusion, there was much more to be done to build his constitution.

.....

Three days later, at the Black Isotta's main entrance which faced the Bramble Forest.

Glenn noticed a man coming towards him. Beefy as a bull, the man was wearing a black leather-made suit, with a giant axe behind his back. His right hand seemed like a layer of black, solid rock, and mysterious, cold lights came off from it.

Glenn stopped and caught sight of Lumen who was behind the man. Immediately, Glenn could guess this man's identity. He then shouted: "Thunder Axe Gade?"

"Yes," replied Gade, displaying his oral cavity which was as scary-looking as sharks.

"And you're Glenn?"

'He must have cultivated some Hematology Sorcery to look like this!' Glenn thought.

He then answered with composure, "Yeah, I'm Glenn."

Gade replied coldly: "You killed Harry right in the face if my partner. He might have done something wrong, but it was not your place to punish him! Now I believe you have been on the hit list of the four best!"

"Is that a threat? If it is, so be it."

Glenn's sorceries were now superb, and he would not be at a disadvantage against sorcery students. In this Sorcerer Continent where apathy ruled relationships between students, he feared no

one.

"Ha!" Gade replied in an icy voice, "I'm not gonna kill you since the school rules forbid it, but this will be enough to teach you a lesson!"

With a thumping sound, the ground below Gade's feet cracked, and the next second, a footprint-shaped gap appeared. Before Glenn could react, Gade had disappeared.

Glenn felt the hair all over his skin bristle, and he produced his shield instinctively for possible attacks.

A second later, the shield had received an impact as if it was from thunder, and several fissures appeared on the shield because of it.

Almost immediately, a huge fist had hit Glenn on his arm with a loud crackling noise, and the punch, which seemed to be made up of granite, sent him several steps backwards. Being nearly incapacitated, his face was extremely pale.

This attack of Gade's had more than 150 degrees and was beyond Glenn's mask to resist.

"That punch was for Harry, and this one is for Lumen."

Having smashed Glenn's shield, Gade had gotten ready to throw his second punch.

Glenn's face became darker. He gnashed his teeth and shouted as he produced his flame armor.

The second punch had been smashed against Glenn. As a result, he was shoved a dozen meters away, and a gush of blood shot from his mouth.

At the time, an owl swooped in and landed on Glenn's shoulder. It stared at Gade with its green eyes and ordered in a high-pitched voice. "Gade, you've been arrested by the Legal Enforcement Team, go to the fifth floor of the Black Isotta and turn yourself in or you'll be sentenced to death and executed immediately."

Glenn spat some blood again, but he could already rise up after he had treated himself with the Glenn Dissimilation Sorcery.

"Seems like the LET is not just lip service," murmured Glenn.

Gade stopped and pulled away his punch. He then swaggered towards the Black Tower, and while leaving, he nodded at Lumen unperturbed. Only, he was heading away fast as if hiding his trembling hand in the sleeve.

Glenn wiped away the blood stains at the corner of his mouth and sneered because he had noticed Gade's trembling hand.

Soon, the owl fluttered its wings and disappeared into the sky.

Chapter 70: The Purple Key

On the 72th floor of the Black Isotta, Norris' lab.

Norris gazed at the three black sorcerers' heads and was feeling the special negative energy coming off from them. Norris' head was like a ragged, sewed-up ball, and his pupils gazed at them wildly, as if they were popping out. He checked the energy again and again, and it seemed that he was doubting its very existence.

It was after a good while that Norris realized his social faux pas in front of his student; he turned serious again as if to show that he had witnessed such strange things a lot.

Noticing that Glenn was trying to refrain himself from laughing, he knew his disgraceful manner had already been exposed. He then snorted. "Tell me then, what happened exactly? Since when do black sorcerers swarm on the Sorcerer Continent, and how could you have killed three?"

Glenn narrated everything he had seen, heard, and inspected, as well as his thoughts on the trip.

Norris was surprised by Glenn's adventure, yet his satisfaction with him grew.

"As I've reiterated, knowledge brings power. However, knowledge itself is not enough; you need to use it smartly, and I see you've comprehended this well! But how could those students believe that hunting down a few puppets controlled by a foreign land creature is gonna complete this inside mission? I'm definitely gonna talk about this with their mentors."

After having said this, Norris pondered and then cried, "You said it was a creature from foreign lands? How did that creature communicate with the humans in the Sorcerer World?"

"I have no idea." Glenn shook his head.

Glenn was not acquainted with communicating with the foreign

lands, nor was it an area of study for students to dabble in.

After a cursory reflection, Glenn said, "It seemed that his messages were conveyed to us through his will. And there was a huge mirror at the underground palace. This is a piece of it. I collected it after I broke the mirror. I thought there might be information in it that can trace its world's coordinates."

Norris took that piece of glass excitedly. "Aha! Boy, you might get super rich! I'll call for the master of the Holy Tower to project his will to verify the authenticity of this information. If it's confirmed, then the master will reward you accordingly. Mind you, the master is a level-six sorcerer, a Stigmata Sorcerer!"

"Level-six... a Stigmata Sorcerer?!" Glenn murmured, looking up at his mentor incredibly, and then he asked in his mind:

'Isn't that the top level sorcerer? And powerful than that would be the ruler governing the endless world—the Necromancy Sorcerer.'

Stigmata sorcerers' power wasn't as formidable as that of a Necromancy Sorcerer, who could kill an approaching sorcerer student without realizing it. However, Stigmata sorcerers would still cause much trouble for students, and the power gap between them and the students was so wide that they were better left undisturbed.

'Guess these sorcerers must have no interest in seeing me, a student!' Thinking about this, Glenn was relieved yet started praying for that Devil Lord from foreign lands who was audaciously using children to collect innocent humans' souls. Now that he was being investigated by a level six sorcerer of the Holy Tower, God knows whether the world he was in could steer clear of his exploration.

If the six masters were to be united as allies, since each owned the sorcery tower of their respective schools on the twelfth section of the Seven Rings Holy Tower, things that ensued would not

concern Glenn at all.

It was beyond Glenn's expectation that this mission would experience such a big twist.

"Ah...Good luck to this Devil Lord from foreign lands. I wish you haven't triggered these sorcerers' curiosity. Otherwise, we will see you being cut into slices in their labs." Glenn sniggered. "I was just on a mission to clear a black sorcerer, yet I found out about this lord's will projection and it revealed his world's coordinates! That's quite a surprising windfall."

At the time, Norris had left for rooms above the 90th floor of the Black Tower where more mysteries were buried deep. Even some of the official sorcerers were not allowed to set foot there.

Glenn didn't waste any time. He pulled out the Devil's Pact, extracted the fire ball on it and deposited it in a tube, and then he started analyzing how this element creature was composed.

Element creatures were created by using the element activation sorcery, which relied on knowledge of elemental energy and biotics. In the process, except for basic elemental control, a complete, proper, biological sketch for the creature had to be conceived.

Generally, because of the limited level of knowledge and wisdom, low-ranking element sorcerers tended to choose creatures existing around them as the prototype to build a sketch creature in their mind, while higher-level sorcerers opted for stronger ones from foreign lands or from the remains of some historic creatures as the prototype, but a proper motivator was a requirement. Besides, the element-activated creatures created through the latter method were more powerful; it would take both expertise and tremendous amount of time to finish.

As for expertise in this field, Glenn had gained insights about the aspects of biotics after his studies on Life Code, which was enough to analyze this motivator he got from that foreign land creature.

Based on this analysis, an element creature sketch would then be likely to be outlined.

The process would be time-consuming, and the most important part was inspirations to carry on the work. In short, it wouldn't be accomplished within a short span of time. But it was said that some highly talented sorcerers had created element-activated creatures same from what they had in mind without using any motivator.

Research on how motivators could lead to an element creature was not a short-time work. It needed sufficient study and constant inspiration. Hence, Glenn didn't rush and turned his attention to other sorceries, and only when inspiration occurred to him, he'd make some adjustment to the outlined creature in his head.

...

In Glenn's hand were two element books belonging to Norris. One was 'Fire Element Density Fire Shield Sorcery', and the other was 'Destructive Force of Fire Blast Sorcery'. Being collected by a level three sorcerer, they were surely excellent books, and Glenn was reading them to reinforce his Body of Fire and the Inextinguishable Flame properties.

According to Fire Element Density Fire Shield Sorcery, fire element took up nearly no space and could cluster into high density in a short time, thus forming a defensive fire element shield—a profound use of element energy. Having flipped through it, Glenn felt confident that an in-depth understanding and flexible practice about this fire shield could be achieved in one or two years.

Destructive Force of Fire Blast Sorcery introduced the fire blast sorcery. The content was very complicated and was even too arcane for students. Apart from sorcerers, possibly only Glenn—a student who had the gift of Body of Fire—could study this book.

However, while reading it, Glenn was distracted by its extensive research. The fire blast sorcery was powerful because it utilized the

antagonistic nature between fire and water elements. Historically, this water-fire-don't-mix property had been studied by ancient sorcerers for power, but the author of this book went further. He/she explored into the cause of why the sorcery developed using the antagonistic fire and water elements was more powerful than the sorcery created by means of non-antagonistic wind and fire elements. In the end, he discovered a force that had the potential to destroy all. It was called the D-Force.

The author's study ended just there though. D-Force would not interact with any known physical matter or sorcery, nor could it be collected. So no use had been found for it. But what this book had found was still instructive, and it had made profound progress in certain aspects. Therefore, sorcerer Norris had collected it in his library.

A thought came to his mind and Glenn's eyes twinkled.

"Perhaps, I'm supposed to learn something like the water and radium elements."

Learning water element was merely for the fire blast sorcery; Glenn wasn't sure whether he could master it while being a student and which was listed as his biggest goal for the time.

Delving into radium element was to study the propulsive property of water and radium elements and to prepare himself for that rare symbol and the twig.

Glenn was over-excited about this and totally forgot about time.

...

Rat-a-tat!

Someone knocked the table.

Glenn raised his head, wearing his dark eye circles, and asked, "What's the matter, mentor?"

Seeing Glenn's exhausted look, Norris' delighted face was

touched a little bit.

Afterwards, Norris gradually eased his excitement, stroked Glenn's head as if he was an elder family member, and murmured, "Boy, haven't you rested for five straight days?"

Glenn was shocked by this closeness. Noticing Norris' sincere eyes, he then relaxed and asked, limbs lost for positions. "It has been five days?"

Glenn's stamina had indeed risen because normally three days was his limit.

"Look at you! Don't be deluded that your stamina is now better, so you can overuse it! A sorcerer doesn't live by pursuing higher goals; they need to enjoy life, as ordinary people do."

That being said, Norris threw a purple key to Glenn and said, "As your mentor, I command you to take a rest!"

Those harsh words were filled with Norris' concern for Glenn.

Glenn took the purple key. It was as long as a finger and was shining. He was surprised, asking, "What is this? I could feel the strong space waves. It has a will."

"This is the Friendship Key of the Black Isotta. It is your award from the master of the Holy Tower. That glass piece does contain the coordinates of that creature's world. That world was far, far away, and the information about its exact location was vague, but it's only a matter of time before we locate them."

The sight of this purple key reminded him of Lafite's golden key.

"So...what can I do with this Friendship Key?" asked Glenn tentatively.

Norris' face went dark, and he said gloomily, "To achieve Black Isotta friendship? Isn't that not enough?"

"Hum," Glenn noticed the anger on the old man's face and replied immediately, "Eh...It's enough. It's the luckiest thing in my life to

have this key. Haha."

Perhaps it was because of the caring actions of Norris, Glenn answered in a freer and easier manner. The teacher-student relationship between them seemed to have changed.

"Through this key, you could summon the Holy Tower master's soul servant of the master thrice. Mind you, a servant belonging to a level six sorcerer. Alright, off you go and have a rest." Norris drove Glenn out of his lab.

Chapter 71: The Repulsive and Gravitational Forces Sorcery

Sunlight passed through the windows and poured itself on the testing table.

The air was filled with the fragrance of tea developed from Ilex—it was mellow yet slightly bitter, which was rather intoxicating.

"About the Repulsive and Gravitational Forces Sorcery, you aren't able to guide the power from nature as a student. What you can pull off, however, is to harness the forces using yourself as the point of origin, thus forming an effective attack or defense. Once becoming a sorcerer by means of this Geocentric stone and the ley line, the two forces will be controlled at your will."

Norris sipped at the Ilex tea with his dry lips and savored its bitterness.

When Glenn was done with his notes, he asked bitterly, "When this Geocentric stone is transplanted into my body, will my skin be split? And the damage to the skin will be irreparably fixed?"

Glenn had inquired about the exactly similar question three times.

When the stone was lodged into someone's body, the host's skin would bear semblance to Norris'. They split and fell off! Therefore, the skin had to be sutured back, thus resembling a shabbily seamed-up bag or ball.

"Humph! No pains, no gains!" Sorcerers were intent on seeking the truth! Their appearance came quite the secondary.

Norris seemed a little miffed at Glenn's reactions, and he snorted.

"There! There..."

At this time, Garfield had jumped around Norris, licked its claws

and afterward kept laughing.

"Young sorcerers do care for their appearances since they haven't undergone years of baptism yet. I think you should get Glenn to start off with the Endless Eyes. His looks won't change much."

Norris grunted, and then threw the Geocentric stone to Glenn, saying unhappily, "It's your decision to make."

That being said, Norris left the laboratory.

Glenn himself was fine with a revolting exterior if it would mean further knowledge and power, but he had to take into account Lafite's feelings about this.

"Shall I go with the Repulsive and Gravitational Forces Sorcery, and the Geocentric stone?"

It was really a tough choice for Glenn to make. Since his mentor, a level three sorcerer, was still suffering from his damaged skin permanently, then the side effect would certainly be real. Even with the Glenn Dissimilation Sorcery, the ruined skin could merely be concealed on a temporary basis.

"Oh! He's getting angry. Glenn, you take care!"

The black cat cocked his butt and tail, stretched itself and jumped away.

In Glenn's hand was a black stone covered with prickles. He studied it while running his fingers through his hair, with a terrible look.

What troubled Glenn was that he knew he would become upset if it was Lafite who would be disfigured.

"Take it off your mind for a moment. Why not delve into this sorcery further before making the final decision? Maybe it can be solved in some way. Besides, to figure out the calculations in order to wield the forces of repulsion and attraction would take me at least six months. It's really a brain-boggling sorcery."

Therefore, Glenn set aside this "nuisance" and focused his research on Fire Element Density Fire Shield Sorcery, alchemy, and also the passive evolution using his ten magic wands. Besides, he was also using the toxic radioactive stone more frequently, from a monthly basis to 1.5 months to two months. As his constitution and the anti-toxic property was enhancing rapidly, he had to inject some more potent potions.

Half a year later.

In Norris' library, Glenn was sitting around, looking over books. Suddenly, an idea sparked into existence to him when he dwelled his eyes on a particular book!

It was called, Discussion on Classification of Blood in Mechanicals, a rudimentary book on mechanical engineering. It contained some creative insights, so Norris had collected it in the shelves.

In fact, Glenn was not that much fond of digging into mechanics. It was not that mechanics was not sufficiently powerful, but that he was just not sensitive to knowledge related to gears, energy conversion and applications, so he mostly ignored such type of books.

However, Glenn had been pestered by Norris with his request to ask Glenn to go for the possibly appearance-disfiguring sorcery, so he had started seriously considering on working on it. And this book he was reading gave him an inspiration.

Sorcerers on mechanics had a mechanical body, and another distinction that separated them from element sorcerers was the purification of artificial blood. The basic gist of which was to convert the practitioner's blood into man-made blood to fit into the mechanically-powered transmission, creating kinetic energy.

The reason why the Geocentric stone was required to be implanted in the practitioner's body was for the balance between attractive force and repulsive force. The role that the stone would

have in the process was to serve as a "point of origin" with fixed coordinates—the central part of the body—to achieve that balance. The sorcery would then be generated after a series of calculations had been conducted.

Based on the book, Glenn had discovered that skin would drop only because they carried uneven weight and the reason was that a human body was not a sphere, and thus didn't have an actual center. Therefore, the alternately functioning attractive force and repulsive force would result in the cracking of the skin. So they had to be seamed up like what Norris had done.

But now, Glenn had a probable solution.

If the Geocentric stone was ground into powder and mixed with the blood evenly, then the powder would be distributed throughout the body and wouldn't change the original coordinates.

As a result, the skin would be stressed evenly, and those side effects would not come with the practice.

Glenn became excited about the idea and told it to Norris after he had trotted to him.

"Well, this sounds feasible, but to add ground Geocentric stone powder to artificial blood... Uh... I'm not quite sure about it since I'm not really into mechanics. I'll visit an old friend of mine to ask whether we can create a neutral liquid or something."

After having said that, Norris left the lab.

Two months later.

Glenn had obtained that liquid as he had wished, and excitement was all over his face.

Norris gave Glenn the liquid and sighed. "If I've done more thinking like you did when I was young, then I wouldn't have to look like this now."

"You can use this liquid to remove the attractive and repulsive forces, and you might restore your original face by using some advanced repair surgery or something."

Glenn proposed this idea, yet he was not sure how.

Norris shook his head, and said, "After all these years, it has become a part of me."

Glenn was taken aback at Norris' response.

Time passed on.

Every day, Glenn immersed himself in the endless world of knowledge, and the more knowledge he obtained, the more he felt that his acquisition of it never was enough. His desire for more of it became stronger.

One year later.

Glenn had finally completed the learning of his fire shield sorcery. After tons of tests, he had developed some vision into it.

First of all, this sorcery was excellent at defending attacks that involved energy.

Due to his Body of Fire and Inextinguishable Flame properties, Glenn currently could absolutely keep off elemental attacks below 100 points, and could effectively weaken attacks with over 100 degrees. Glenn did not test out the exact maximum defensive power, but with the help of his Ashen mask, his defense was now perfect.

However, the fire shield's defense against wind and soil elements was slightly weaker, only at 70 to 80 degrees.

But amazingly, the shield could protect Glenn from 150-degree water element attacks. However, once a water element attack ripped its defense, it would cause much more significant damage to him than other elements attacks in the same situation.

The second discovery about the fire shield concerned its defense

against physical attacks. The fire shield could break under a 30-degree physical assault. But as the sorcery was based on the outburst of energy compressed in high concentration within a short period of time, its counterattack power was at least three times as much as his normal fire attack power, and the fire could not be put out.

Finally, it was about the inextinguishable attribute.

As mentioned above, the fire shield could work because it was condensed in a split second. Therefore, for most sorcerers, the fire element would dissipate under that pressure in a while. That didn't apply to Glenn's fire shield though because of its inextinguishable attribute, which meant that the magical force consumed in the process was very low. Thus, the fire shield could be sustained.

This advantage made fire shield a more powerful sorcery than Glenn's Ashen mask.

Glenn was excited about this achievement. Furthermore, he could now concentrate more of his energy on Destructive Force of Fire Blast Sorcery, and study on water and radium elements should be put on higher agenda.

"I'll crack on them after this mandatory task is over." Glenn set his arrangement in his mind.

Suddenly, Glenn's crystal ball received some soul information.

"Robinson, what's up? You're not gonna gossip with me through this, right?"

Glenn put down the semi-finished product (made through the magic of alchemy) in his hand, and joked to Robinson.

Glenn great mood was noticeable, because the sorcery of Repulsive and Gravitational forces had made initial progress, and other experimental studies had been progressing steadily, especially alchemy.

Soon, Glenn realized that something was wrong. Robinson seemed quite serious.

"What's going on? Say something!" Glenn became irritated by Robinson's hesitation.

Finally, Robinson replied, "Lafite just came back from the area and she was hurt!"

Glenn's face became dark. Injury was not a big deal for sorcerers. But he could tell from Robinson's anxious face that she had been injured seriously.

"Who did that to her?" Glenn sounded cold. All of his gaiety resulting from his research progress had been erased.

"It was Bionna!" Slowly, Robinson said it.

Chapter 72: The Guardian

In Lafite's room.

Chris, Nina, Robinson, and Robin were present outside of Lafite's room, along with a few members of the Death Sail League. Glenn was not acquainted with them, yet they had a close relationship with Lafite.

Glenn flew there hurriedly and landed at Lafite's room. He then asked worriedly, "How is she doing?"

"Glenn, just go in there and check. She's never been so aggrieved, but she tried to maintain calm and just drove us out," Chris answered Glenn reluctantly.

"Hm," Glenn responded lightly, then he entered the room and left behind the crowd outside.

Chris then heaved a sigh, and said slowly, "Since Glenn is here, we can leave."

In a while, the crowd had thinned, and who remained there were only Chris, Nina, Robinson and Robin. Suddenly, Robin hesitantly ventured a question.

"Glenn flew here. It seems that he didn't use a Magic Tool at all, right?"

The few words reminded the remaining group of Robin's observation.

Robinson became astounded at his speculation. He then said, with his mouth yawning, "Is Glenn now an official sorcerer? Only a sorcerer could harness the natural power Robinson became astounded at his speculation. He then said, with his mouth yawning,."

"That's not possible!" Chris doubted it loudly, "I'm not gonna agree with you on this if reason is still with me."

Nina cut in and said like a timid lamb, "Maybe it's Glenn's special sorcery. He has gotten himself a mentor after all."

It was a fact known to Chris and the others that Glenn had been admitted by a sorcerer, but they didn't know it was one of the school's presidents—sorcerer Norris—except for, of course, Lafite.

However, the group did feel that Glenn had become mysterious by the day, and he had gotten far ahead of them in terms of sorcery acquisition. Failing to figure out the reason, they left gradually.

And the reason for Glenn's ability to fly was a primitive application of the repulsive-gravitational force.

...

The door creaked open gently.

"As I said, I'm fine. Please just leave me alone." Believing that it was Chris and Nina again, Lafite said impatiently.

She was attentively studying an orange-colored leaf at her testing table. It was giving off a strong fragrance. Glenn judged that the leaf had psychedelic and narcotic effects. When hearing the noise of the door being opened, she spoke these words without moving her eyes off the leaf.

Lafite's "laboratory" was spacious and bright. Gleams of sunlight penetrated the room windows and landed on the table. The bookshelf behind her was antique and exquisite. A few rare plants were separately placed on the corners of the room, and one of them was so luxuriant that its vines reached the roof and encircled it several times, presenting the room a beautiful botanical garden.

Of course, as the closest and dearest person to Lafite, Glenn was well-aware of the fact that these plants didn't only serve as ornaments.

At this time, as Lafite was doing her research, her brown-dark hair caught a strand of sunlight, which made the ice on her face more noticeable. She was using ice to reduce the pain!

At this time, as Lafite was doing her research, her brown-dark hair caught a strand of sunlight, which made the ice on her face more noticeable. She was using ice to reduce the pain!

As Lafite inadvertently brushed off the strand of hair that had covered her face, Glenn noticed her face. Half of it had been dehydrated and withered to the extent of a dead woman's, and the necrotic skin had spread to her neck and below. Glenn guessed that maybe half of her body might have been damaged. Upon seeing this, he couldn't help but clench his fist.

The silver lining out of it was that the area where the normal skin and the impaired skin was located seemed to be healing, and it was a few tender shoots belonging to some vines that were doing the job. However, the process seemed to be tough and slow and it might take several years to be fully cured.

Upon seeing this, Glenn could judge that it must be Bionna who had caused this—the woman who always pretended to be innocent!

When thinking of the crabby temperament of both Lafite and Bionna, Glenn found that it was easier to understand why there had been a conflict going on between them.

Lafite was sitting at the table quietly. Despite the ugly appearance, she still wore that arrogant look. While watching Lafite, he felt his heart breaking. What he could do was not to step further, abiding by the underlying rule shared by sorcerers—respecting one's independence!

The silence lasted for quite a while. Lafite had forgotten that someone had come in, while Glenn chose not to break the silence of this moment.

After some time, Lafite seemed to have made some progress on her research. She then took a sip at the coffee on her side, which had cooled down, and stretched herself casually. Suddenly, she met Glenn's eyes. Something subtle between them had begun fermenting in the air.

Lafite hadn't cared for her appearance in front of Chris and others. Now, when she found Glenn, she lifted her hand and slightly covered the ugly half of her face. It wouldn't make a difference though, she just did it on instinct.

The previous confident eyes of Lafite's turned distraught and nervous. After a long silence, she managed to say a few words.

"You are here!"

The voice sounded aloof and inflexible. Lafite tried to be as haughty as she once was, but right now, that pride didn't work out well. Seeing her beloved Glenn, she seemed rather upset by her revolting exterior. She then lay down her hand, and exposed that part of her face, trying to resume her usual arrogance but almost immediately, she lowered her head, wanting to hide something.

Glenn said nothing. He just walked up to her. He was close to her and he could feel her body's temperature and smell her scent. He was doing his best to comprehend her complex feelings.

"Any progress on your experiment?" Glenn asked gently as if he had neither noticed Lafite's appearance nor did he know anything about Bionna. He said it as if it was just the usual, even dull yet caring words. He wanted Lafite to know that, no matter what happened, he would always be there.

"Haha..."

Lafite broke out a laughter suddenly. She then stood up and gazed at Glenn silently with her bright, clear eyes.

After that pause, she said delightedly, "Glenn, your mentor was right! Knowledge is the strongest tool we can possess. Gift is subsidiary. We're no longer the weak ones waiting to be slaughtered back on the ship. The Desperaters are not undefeatable anymore!"

Glenn was greatly puzzled by Lafite's drastic change of topic. But the content had truly rung in his heart.

"Knowledge is the strongest tool one can possess. Gift is only subsidiary."

It occurred to Glenn that the Glenn Secret Tri-Sorcery was the type that utilized knowledge to replicate others' sorceries.

Till now, Glenn had possessed one gift—Body of Fire. Based on Life Code, this gift was kind of forcibly taken! There were still two spots for the other two sorceries, which Glenn had saved for much more powerful gifts to get in the future.

However, Glenn had never truly understood that gifts were only secondary.

For sorcerers, a good gift meant that it could be used favorably to boost his/her current research. For those who had over 10 points of mental strength yet weren't able to put good use of them were still not given enough attention from sorcerers.

At this moment, Glenn was suddenly enlightened.

Knowledge was progressing all the time, but gifts could only stay at the original point. It would be rendered useless someday and would then only exist in memory. That meant, only those who could get stronger and survive in a certain period could gain the chance for more learning and then become one of the most powerful sorcerers.

...

Glenn accompanied Lafite silently as if he was her shadow. He shared her joy, watched her lose temper and soothed her loneliness and sorrow, which would be displayed only to him.

One night, Lafite walked in big strides in the school. Each step was taken in a manner that said she had recovered her confidence.

That night was when the Death Sail League called a gathering. In front of the presence of people excluding Glenn, she seemed as if she had never cared for her looks and manner of behavior, beautiful or not, she would always focus on herself and pursue her

own ends.

Glenn in his loose robe followed her, soundless and odorless, like an anonymous shadow of a gorgeous girl.

"Lafite! Here you are!"

On the dark road, a sharp, aggrieved voice was heard.

A tall, male sorcerer student came into view. He was tall yet slim, like a bamboo stick in a gust.

His robe was blowing in the wind and the long black hair cascaded down his face, yet it couldn't cover his eyes filled with distress, sorrow, and hatred!

The man stared at Lafite with detestation.

Lafite stopped and glared at the man. "Roga? One of the top ten students of the school, ranked ninth, right?"

Although Lafite knew that at present, she could not compare to him or to other members of the top ten, her voice still sounded arrogant and confident because she knew she was not alone!

"You hurt my poor little Bionna! I've never seen her injured with such severity upon entering the school. She's so cute and innocent that she's like an angel to her mentors and her seniors! But now, she should have been hurt by you—a malicious woman! I know her mentor can't punish you for that, but as her senior fellow student, I will do that for her!"

As the voice ceased, a strong magical wave followed.

Lafite stood still as if she had given up fighting back.

Glenn took a small step forward, and then produced the fire element shield to protect Lafite. He then used his other hand to catch the water spout, upon which, in Glenn's eyes, was unimpressive.

An explosion followed.

Glenn made a despising expression, and his eyes under the Ashen Mask shrunk. "This intensity of power..."

Gnashing his teeth, Glenn then released from his palm a repulsive force. He then swung his hand violently as he gave a loud shout. Afterwards, the water spout changed its tracks.

Boom!

In the darkness, a dilapidated wall in the distance tumbled down. This disturbance attracted a night owl, whose green eyes stared at Roga tightly.

Glenn retreated back without even showing any hostility or glancing at Roga and continued masquerading as if he was Lafite's shadow.

Roga got so angry. He fixed his eyes on the man behind Lafite. He couldn't believe it at all!

"There's actually such a powerful person like you in the school? Maybe I haven't left the Black Tower for too long!"

The night owl stared at Roga coldly. "You are now under arre..."

The night owl was suddenly stunned and didn't finish its sentence.

Lafite, Glenn, and Roga, who was waiting to be dealt with, were all puzzled, not knowing what had happened to the night owl from the Legal Enforcement Team.

Fifteen minutes later, the night owl ignored the three and suddenly fluttered its wings and flew high into the air. Its shrill voice pierced through the night.

"Attention! Attention! All students, go to your mentors immediately. Students without mentors, go to the square right now!"

Hundreds of night owls joined that owl and screamed out the same orders as if something urgent had happened.

In a flash, the whole school plunged into a state of turmoil!

Chapter 73: Declaring War

Upon hearing the owls' instructions, Glenn rushed back into his mentor Norris' lab on the 79th floor of the Black Isotta.

In the room, Glenn met Norris' wife Alice, Varro, and the cat, Garfield. He also noticed the existence of a woman he had never heard of. Strangely, this woman was all wrapped up in white bandages.

After having caught his breath, Glenn greeted Alice in the manner that sorcerers followed.

Alice was a gourmet. Except for her special hand, she was no different from an ordinary human. Although Glenn hadn't had many chances to converse with her, he knew that Alice was an amiable woman and that trait was known to all. She was gentle and lovely!

Suddenly, Alice said softly to Glenn, "Glenn, since your mentor is away, I'll introduce this woman to you. Norris accepted her as a student before Varro and you."

"Call me Quiet Spring. Mentor has told me about how you've figured out a way to repair damaged skin, and how you could take advantage of the forces of repulsion and gravitation. I thought it was a brilliant idea"

The woman introduced by Alice had a cold voice, and between the white bandages was displaying a pair of dreadful eyes that showed no emotions. She appeared just like a devil having walked out of the fields composed of dead bodies!

Glenn gazed at this strange-looking woman in front of him who he had noticed the moment he came in the lab.

"This is the 'senior' sister Norris has mentioned!" Glenn thought.

If it was not for Alice's introduction, Glenn would have forgotten that he had a senior sister under Norris' mentorship.

Having realized this fact, Glenn couldn't help but throw some more glances at her. There seemed to be nothing worthy of much looking out for.

She was coated in white bandages as mentioned, some of which were fluttering in the breeze. What was exposed was just a pair of sharp eyes. The tight bandages made her look slim, agile and wild! It was as if the heaven and earth would be destroyed if she made a stride forward. One could also notice a long sword behind her back, and black smokes were rising in a spooky manner.

"Senior sister!"

Glenn stepped up to her and greeted her in sorcerer etiquette. He could feel her high level life information instinctively.

At this time, Varro chuckled, "Senior sister is a level three sorcerer in terms of her greatness of power. She was the first one to compete in the Holy Tower trials on behalf of our school! I bet you don't know that Glenn, do you?"

"A level three sorcerer?!" Glenn became startled. He looked at the woman before him and could hardly believe the fact that this weirdly-dressed student had the same level of power as their mentor Norris.

"Despite that, she's been waiting her time on these useless things for decades. I'm convinced that it won't even take several decades before you'll become a sorcerer. It seems like you would be the inheritor of our mentor's wisdom," Varro proceeded.

Quiet Spring snorted back at Varro, "I've achieved something! I've obtained something when I was engaged in the Demon-Hunting expedition in the foreign lands. Enclosed in it is an evil spirit, which is in an unconscious state. The amazing thing about it is that it's totally immune to physical attacks and negative power attack."

Quiet Spring fished in her bandage and got out a bead of the size

of a human's nail. Then he flung it to Glenn.

"Glenn, when you become a sorcerer some day, there might be a need that you use it."

Glenn moved quickly and caught it, saying,

"An evil spirit?"

When Glenn was saying this, he was suddenly reminded of Robin's green-eyed macaque. It was natural enemies of this evil spirit. Meanwhile, Glenn became hectic on receiving such a gift. He knew that evil spirits had many distinctive properties. Under certain circumstances, it might be of great significance.

"Thank you!" Glenn said in thrilled voice.

At this point, Garfield suddenly jumped onto Quiet Spring's shoulder which was bounded by the white bandages. It then licked his paws standing on it and said to Glenn drearily, "I bet you still have no idea why the students are assembled, do you?"

Glenn stared in a daze and nodded.

"Because the Holy Tower trial is approaching! Against this background, schools on the 19th section of the Holy Tower of Seven Rings desire to slash the number of their students! And they're doing it by declaring war on the schools on the 12th section."

Garfield then explained further, "And they've got their reasons! Over the past 200 years, frictions on both sides were common, including the ship hijack thing that happened seven years ago. The Black Isotta robbed a ship belonging to Lilith School of Sorcerers!"

The black cat stared at Glenn thoughtfully after having said that.

"A war?!" Glenn became startled for a sec and then fell into frustration, because he had recalled something terrible done by a shameful sorcerer from his current school. He robbed a ship loaded with students heading for the Lilith seven years ago! And he was

on the ship.

"If I had gone to the Lilith lying on the 19th section of the Holy Tower of seven Rings, would it be a totally different experience?"

Then came Alice's gentle voice, which brought Glenn back to reality.

"Our concept on nurturing students differs from the 19th section. We eliminate students through fierce competition. So, usually, the methods applied here are crueler. Thus, elites useful to the sorcerer world will be thus selected from 'inside'. However, on the 19th section, they stress on peaceful ways for knowledge acquirement. And at last, the best students will be sifted out from 'outside'. In other words, every time, a decade or more prior to the Holy Tower trials, they will proclaim war on schools of the 19th section."

"An elite-section school war!" This uncanny elimination method made Glenn gulp.

"Easy! The majority of the students there are much weaker. Their average battle strength is dwarfed by ours'. Besides, they're not experienced in real combats because they've spent most of their time in the labs. Most of them are just arrogant, low-intelligence creatures." Quiet Spring continued, "To give you an idea of how weak they are, we'll look at the first few years when the students were admitted by the schools, the recruits who came to the schools in the same year as I entered Black Isotta. In that school war, we 12th section plundered their resource reservoirs and hunted their people for nearly half a year. It was kind of an elite-selection process on their side."

"Ransacking resource reservoirs? Is it why the schools want a war or does a war simply mean to let the students to kill?!"

At this time, Glenn had gained a clearer comprehension why the Desperators in the First-Years Sorcery Testl were favored by the schools by getting the "resources" in the Mirror drop house!

"To look at the big picture, this is a world where sorcerers rule. Either for the tower owners to grow their power or for the sorcerer world to invade, the least requirement is to raise up real sorcerers! They lack no ordinary students who are unlikely to become sorcerers. If they were, a level four Stigmata sorcerer could have easily gathered armies of foreign land creatures. To conclude, the ultimate purpose of the war on both sides is a selection process. When the elites are picked out, resources will be then saved on them," said Quiet Spring, and she then continued.

"The only difference was that 12th section's way was crueller from the beginning until the end, while the 19th was mild until the final hell-like screening process. And in the process, the elites from the 12th section actually became the people responsible for downsizing these schools' students in the 19th section. And there, since the student number base is massive, and even though they have chances on their research and study, and the schools have good policies, the large chunk of them couldn't get magic stones in return after they've killed their competitors and obtained their magic chain marks (chains on their foreheads) during the First Years' Sorcery Test. So they have lost the opportunity for further improvement."

This fact had both advantages and disadvantages.

Glenn remembered that when the Lilith School was in charge of the ship, sorcerer Dior gave the order of no killing among the students. However, a horrible civil strife ensued just after Fake Faceless, or sorcerer Nilmar, took the vessel. Yet because of the slaughter, the selection turned out to be very effective and the establishment of the Dead Sail League was born out of it.

Glenn breathed a relief and thought,

"The nine schools on the 19th section are many. But their actual combat capacity don't even compare to the six schools on the 12th. Still, keep in mind to take extra care in dealing with the elites from their part."

At this time, Varro spoke,

"Glenn, I do not excel at killing. So my main job is to keep the resource reservoirs intact. Remember one thing though, the enemies all have a badge. Grabbing them is very important, so collect as many as you can!"

"Badges?" asked Glenn.

The mention of badge immediately reminded him of the chain marks he got in the test. He then asked in surprise, "What's it used for?"

Varro glanced at Quiet Spring and then said, "Ask her. I just know that last time it was highly rated. You couldn't buy one without paying 1,000 magic stones!"

Quiet Spring then added lightly, "Assemble 100 of them and you'll be given a chance to visit the secret mirror in the Black Tower till the tower master's soul servants throw you out."

Now, Glenn had realized that it was actually the master's little reward to incentivize the elite students. It was kind of like a game he played with them!

Glenn then asked, "What will I get by seeing the mirror?"

Quiet Spring paused for a while and then shook her head, "I just stayed in front of it for about an hourglass before I was compelled to leave. I didn't find anything!" She then continued, "In ancient times, a small world adjoining the sorcerer world was broken into pieces, and a piece of it was contained in the mirror. It retains many fantastic creatures which have never existed in here, along with some ancient relics worthy of digging and research. But the stuff in the mirror is not appreciated by the master himself and usually, they were only guarded by their soul servants."

"A broken piece of a smaller world? Is this world the one that was destroyed during the first war between the sorcerer world and the foreign lands?" Glenn thought.

After two hourglasses' worth of time, Norris returned. He then said gloomily.

"A new rule regarding this war came from above. Both sides will have three chances to dispatch the guardians!"

"Guardians? The owls? These creatures are equivalent to sorcerers in terms of their power! That's why they are one of the master's elite squad of soul servants. If a student was watched by one, he/she'd stand no chance to escape!" Glenn thought.

The new rule startled Glenn as well as Varro, and then Glenn inquired sullenly, "How do we deal with it then?"

Norris contemplated it for a moment. Then he squinted his eyes and said, "I don't know exactly why they made such an arrangement. But the only solution to this is to maintain low-keyness! Don't let your enemy discover your ability. Or, we could focus our 'fire' to finish off their guardians! Each school only has three chances to send out its guardian. That's 27 times in total for those nine schools. And we could counteract 18 times by sending ours to neutralize them. Thus, what we need to handle is 9 times of owl attack."

"Nine owl attacks, then it won't come to your turn for a fight with them," Norris continued.

"Won't come to my turn?" Glenn replied.

Glenn doubted Norris' speculation. He dared not to get his hopes up over sheer luck, or he might waste a chance of using the Black Isotta's Friendship Key! And although he knew by saying "directions coming from above" referred to the towers' masters, he had no comprehension over the rule change.

"Do they desire to remind the contestants of staying low-key and not being too self-centered before obtaining absolute capability? Or they just want us to be kind of more united? Or to balance the two camps of students? Glenn asked.

Glenn's question was not answered. Instead, Norris said something to him and Varro.

"The resource reservoirs will be ascertained within a month. You two, go get yourselves prepared."

It seemed that something was going on in the sorcerer world, but Norris divulged nothing and instead asked them to leave except Quiet Spring.

"Remember, don't use the Friendship Key until there's no other way," Norris warned Glenn before he left.

Chapter 74: The Final Preparation

The war between the schools.

The so-called school-war was just a game created by the master of the towers, the Stigmata sorcerers, to help select the elite sorcerer students. But as a chess piece in the game, Glenn still needed to be discreet.

Normally, the game was used to filter a large number of students in the 19th section, and the 'elite' students in the 12th section would serve as judges, training partners, and executioners. Ten to twenty percent of the students would die from the ambushes launched by their opponents each year.

Also, according to the senior sister, Quiet Spring, if the battle went too well in the earlier stage, the conflicts inside the 12th section would become a problem.

'If one wants to do his own researches and live a peaceful life, he'll have to become a formal sorcerer, just like the Duke from the Krakatoa Harbor.' Glenn thought.

Glenn walked back to his dorm and started constructing a future plan.

Things had changed. Glenn initially wanted to spend his remaining ten years prior to the Holy Tower trials to rank up, but it seemed like he had to join the event.

For the future plan, first, he needed to do something about the two unoccupied gift slots rendered possible by the Glenn Secret Tri-sorcery.

The slots should be filled with practical and developable talents. Glenn already had something in his mind after the days he had spent with Lafite. The rare water sign talent of Bionna and Kyrie's space-twisting talent were probably his best choice.

The first reason why Glenn chose the two gifts was that he had

easy access to Bionna and Kyrie since they were in the same school. Besides, their talents were helpful in various situations.

Glenn had a high affinity with the fire element, so his affinity with the water element was extremely low. He doubted if he could successfully finish creating even the most simple water matrix on his soul. For that reason, Glenn might also be deterred to finish the Destructive Force of Fire Blast Sorcery. However, if given Bionna's talent concerning water element, he could finish the Fire Blast sorcery before the Holy Tower Trails began.

As for Kyrie's space-twisting gift, it had special effects on human bodies. It could help Glenn shun away from threats or initiate ambushes. Also, it could be easily developed in the future and Glenn would be able to gain advantages if engaged in possible sorcerer invasions against other civilizations.

Although the talent was weaker than Daughter of Sun's Body of Fire at the moment, it had not yet reached its limit and it would become much stronger in the future.

The third option to fill Glenn's remaining gift opening was Sam's Immortal Body. It was a mysterious talent. Glenn had developed a better understanding of it as he had gained more knowledge, but the results would be unpredictable, and he had to give it up.

And the immortal property was kind of misleading because it would only protect the practitioner from being killed against the sorcerers that had not yet mastered the enclosure sorcery.

As the Daughter of Sun once said, if she was confronted by a sorcerer that had mastered the enclosure sorcery, she would be as weak as an ordinary student. Obviously, a student would not be able to learn it because apart from the high intelligence required, one must have a profound knowledge of time and space, and energy balance to cultivate it. Also, it would cost them hundreds, tens of hundreds or even tens of thousands of years to study and do research on such a sorcery that had such a great potential.

Another thing worthy of Glenn's focus was to avoid drawing the attention of the "guardians" from the 19th section.

His priority was to join the Holy Tower trials that would be held more than ten years later, so he did not want to waste time in the school war that would last years or even over a decade; he could easily use that time to increase his strength. What was more, Glenn would be weak when enhancing his body constitution by exposing himself to the poisons, so he would have to rely on the team.

A weak Glenn was still much stronger than an ordinary sorcerer student, though. As Lafite put it, he was on par with Bionna now.

Sorcerer Norris had instructed Glenn to lay low while, at the same time, he couldn't flinch from the war and had to fight for the badges. Thus, the best method that Glenn could come up with was to stay with Lafite.

And Lafite had not recovered from her wound. Although the injury would not impact her ability to fight much, Glenn still felt guilty...

Glenn had considered all the conditions and decided to stay low-key during the war. First, he had Lafite and other friends to take care of, and second, staying with a stable team would greatly raise the survival chances in a war, and he could use the free time to do effective experiments.

All in all, everything Glenn was going to do was for the Holy Tower trials that would be held in 13 years and then become the greatest demon-hunting sorcerer in the sorcerer world.

...

In the abandoned arena of the school.

With the Ashen Mask on his face, Glenn followed the hint provided by Kris and walked towards the location where Bionna gave Lafite that wound in the fight.

Leaving no trace behind, Glenn looked like a ghost advancing in the darkness. He kept using his hunting nose to detect any odor or something left by Bionna. The only thing Glenn needed was his target's blood or other life information and he would be able to cast the secret Tri-sorcery to copy their talent.

"Huh?!"

The smell... It belonged to Bionna!

The hunting nose under Glenn's mask never forgot this "evil" smell. It was Bionna's! Glenn carefully walked towards a corner of the spacious arena, and Bionna's smell was getting more intense as he passed through the trees and bushes.

"BAM BAM..."

Two sorcery waves ahead caught Glenn's attention, coming from where Bionna's smell was. Glenn's expression changed. If the two destroyed the life information left by Bionna, he could not imagine how much extra time he would need to track Bionna down to get it.

Glenn's feet got off the ground and rose into the air as the formulas governing the Repulsive and Gravitational Forces flashed in his mind. Blazing flames spurted out of Glenn's body; he looked like a sun in a smaller size hanging in the sky. The sun was coming off seemingly infinite light and heat which then turned into a meteor and rushed toward where the sorcery waves were coming from.

The meteor left a trail of a heat wave in the sky.

The two students only had about 60 to 80 degrees of magic waves. They stopped fighting right after they realized someone strong was present. One of the student's eyes contracted and at the same time shouted, "It's the one who ranks as the 7th among the top ten..."

However, the man withdrew from finishing the sentence after

catching sight of Glenn's Ashen Mask, "No, it's the Ashen Mask Glenn. He's on the hunting list!"

The hunting list was created by the top four students who were also the leaders of the school's four major leagues. Its purpose was to force the elite students to join them. However, most of the other top ten students did not like what they did, and the Death Sail League had started to go against the list which they believed would bring negative impact to its development.

Glenn was not concerned about the two. He passed through them with fire surrounding his body, and his line of sight fell upon something more important.

There was an enormous tree that was cut in half ahead. Green walked towards it and sniffed at the dried blood stain carefully and collected a sample of it excitedly. He then left the abandoned arena and flew back to his dorm right.

It was not until Glenn had disappeared from their sight when they regained the courage to breathe heavily, and cold sweat had dripped down the two students' chins.

They were convinced that the students on the hunting list would be invariably strong.

And the man who had passed through them was not just a powerful student. He had overtaken them in terms of sorcery while they were several years ahead of him entering the school.

The two students suddenly lost the motivation to duel, and they stared at each other for a second before they flew away to opposite directions.

One day after, in the abandoned arena again.

"Ashen Mask Glenn! You won this time! I'll see you in 13 years on the trials!" Kyrie's voice echoed in the air and he then disappeared as space was distorted.

Glenn chuckled, and his three-or-four-meter-long arm slowly

returned to its original shape, and it almost looked like there was no bone inside his arm. Also, he carefully collected the blood left on the blade of the End Sound dagger in his hand.

Glenn had challenged Kyrie to a fight with him and Kyrie had accepted it without much thought. The result was obvious. Although Kyrie had made some improvements recently, yet essentially Glenn was on a higher level. He had not yet been considered as one of the top ten students, but it was already possible for him to win a fight with someone who ranked between No. 5 and No. 10.

...

20 days later.

Glenn had finished analyzing Bionna's gift. The rare water element sign could stimulate evaporating from the target's body, and because of it, the enemies being hit by Bionna's golden eye would dry up and wither.

After having absorbed the rare water sign, Glenn's affinity and sensation with the water element had been greatly enhanced. Based on this, he could finally continue on the study on the fire blast sorcery.

As for Kyrie's talent, the space-twisting property was sort of similar to Body of Fire and could be explained using his body's physical composition. Its effect was to buff the force in the space in different ways, such as twisting, pushing, direction changing, and folding. It was a strong application!

In Glenn's understanding, the length, width, and height in the three-dimensional world could be folded like a piece of paper. If the two points on the same paper met, space would be distorted, and then he could change his location immediately.

What Glenn needed was practical experiences in large quantities, and when his control of space would become better as he got used

to distortion. But to master it, he needed more knowledge about space.

.....

Seven days later, the last day before the war.

In Glenn's laboratory.

"Haha...Finally...finally! This wand! This memorable wand! It's finally completed! I'll name it the Glenn Holy Fire Element Grand Wand! Well...umm...no, something is missing... It's version 1.0. Yeah, it shall be called the Glenn Holy Fire Element Grand Wand Version 1.0!"

However, the wand looked great though its property was a shame to Alchemy itself.

Not considering Glenn's elements' effect, magical consumption would be reduced by 3.5% when fire element sorcery under 300 degrees was launched and the attack power would be increased by 1%. And it was also credited to the precious crystal stone, a gift to Glenn as a compensation by the Daughter of Sun's mentor, the Inextinguishable Soul.

If he learned that Glenn crafted such an item with it, he would not be pleased and something terrible might entail.

Although Glenn had wasted a rare magical material on the wand, it was still a great landmark achievement to himself.

Glenn had spent years before finally crafting his first magical tool after wasting a great number of alchemy materials.

However, he was still much faster than those students studying alchemy.

Chapter 75: Evil Eye Kasmira

On the high tower was a solemn team of sorcerers numbering about 300, and below the tower, tens of thousands of students had been gathered.

"I'm here to announce, in defiance of the insolent provocation imposed on us by people from the 19th section, we, the 12th section, have reached a consensus to make a tough response, and all of the six schools in our section will wage war against them! Let's give those good-for-nothings a lesson!" A high-pitched sorcerer howled over the crowd of the students.

Each and every student was aware that beneath the cover of this battle call, something was going on. Nothing was as simple as it looked. The students were not those young and rash fools any more. And they doubted if there had been any provocation at all.

Despite this, no doubts were expressed vocally by any of the students.

After seven or eight sorcerers had given long speeches, the three presidents of the Black Isotta stepped forward from the team of the sorcerers.

The first president was said to be a legend — a sorcerer who existed on a higher level than that of sorcerer Norris. His body was fully wrapped in a cloak and the shadows. A giant sword in the shape of a cross was positioned behind his back which looked ancient and sturdy. It was the Green Stone sword.

"I ask you that, during the war, more than 30 out of the 200 resource points must be taken by us, otherwise...the Black Isotta will renounce the right to take part in the Holy Tower trials." He murmured.

Hiss...

The students who had been in the school for decades gulped. "If

so, what is the point of having waited all these years?" There was obvious anger in their faces, and Glenn grimaced too.

The second president sorcerer Norris stood out, his stitched face showing. A gasp could be heard from those students who had never seen his scary face before.

"The second thing about the war. There is this protector rule, I'm sure you all it? I'll send the protectors when necessary to fight against the protectors sent to target you by our enemy." Norris grinned in an evil manner, which he was not used to doing. He might be doing it to make his tone more appropriate to the occasion.

The last president came forward. This sorcerer was surrounded by some misty fog, revealing no features. From time to time, the sounds of trickling water could be heard when he spoke.

"I'll be watching to make sure the rules of war be fully honored by both sides. If anyone from the six schools in the 12th section runs beyond the limits of the war zone, I'll take his or her life. And for the 19th section, if they send official sorcerers to the war or dispatch protectors for more times than allowed, the war will be then escalated," said a male sorcerer whose voice was gentle yet resolute.

With the three speeches finished, students began dropping off and the sorcerers were made to stay to make arrangements about the war.

"It seems the war is not only about the students. Some sorcerers are stakeholders, too. This will explain their enthusiasm to enroll students and plan for this war." Glenn wondered. "Something good will come to them if their students could get a chance in the trial? Otherwise would it be necessary to have a level two sorcerer rob the ship bounding for the Lilith School of Sorcerers for just Kyrie and Bionna years ago?"

Moments later.

Lafite took out a map, and said seriously. "Our team is tasked to go here, a frontline resource point. It's a tungsten ore range."

Glenn, Robinson, Robin, Chris, and Anna all directed their eyes to the map.

"Frontline? What makes them think our team is able to do this? The 35 frontline ore points are the most dangerous, second only to the 15 places in the very center." Robinson complained.

Chris laughed. "I've heard that the 19th students are all dorks. Let's do this and see who the stronger ones are and what gave them the courage to declare war on us."

Chris had no idea about the complexity of the relations among the schools.

"Lafite, the interdictions you asked me to buy are in the dormitory. I bought them from the Death Sail League." With her half damaged face covered in a mask, Anna spoke timidly, sneaking looks at Lafite's disfigured half face. Seeing Lafite was not bothered by her face, she admired her positive mentality while a hatred against the one who did this to Lafite—Bionna—rose.

"Got it." Lafite tucked back her long, brown hair, and then grimaced. "We all take some interdictions with us when going to the war zone." She paused and then said. "Glenn, would you like me in a short haircut?"

"Hmm, either style would work for me." Glenn replied, surprised.

"Oh, that would be good then. Long hair is pretty but it would be a hindrance in war. I'm gonna make it shorter."

Since the group was close to each other, Robinson took the opportunity and asked. "Robin, my wife, would do you like me wearing a beard? I think I would look more manly if I did that, what do you think?"

"If you do that, then we won't live under the same roof."

Robinson sighed and made a change of subject. "Hope the schools will send us some good teammates, at least not some fools."

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The team of six was traveling in the Bramble Forest, each of them with a sack of magical interdictions on them.

They traversed nearly half of this irregular forest before arriving at the frontier with the Ivory Castle School of Sorcerers. Then they proceeded to climb over Mount Daqipeng, and afterwards they arrived at the destination and looked down at an expansive valley.

The valley was a bonanza with rich resources which were explored by schools from both sections. Over one thousand resources lay here and 200 out of those were fenced out for scramble in the coming war.

"Halt."

Lafite stopped suddenly, thoughtful. Then she said: "We need to make a little detour. Before us is the Hitura Crocodile swamp. It's dangerous."

Glenn stilled. He hadn't heard of this Hitura crocodile. He lacked no magical stones and didn't labour in this forest to earn them.

"Look, Lafite." Anna yelled in surprise and pointed to a green dragonfly the size of an arm not far before them.

"It's a Green Hopper Dragonfly." Robinson shouted.

Green Hopper Dragonfly looked just as normal as other dragonflies but what distinguished them, beside its size, was its proboscis, which this insect used to drink the sap of some trees. It was a rare species. Its use for students was the water of life in its body. Drink it and the meditation would work better.

"Everybody, don't make a move. Chris, us two go after it together." Lafite said calmly, and then slowly, she drew out her longbow.

Energy swelled, an element arrow was loaded on the string and then fired.

"You got it." Chris laughed. Then his cheekbone protruded, and body hair lengthened, just what it would look like when Hematology sorcery was activated. He then kicked off and dashed away.

Seconds later, Chris had come back with the dead dragonfly with an arrow in it. Lafite took it, threw it to Glenn, and said lightly: "You are nearly an expert on pharmacology. Concoct us six vials of potions for meditation, and you can keep the spare material."

Glenn had been following behind Lafite along the way. He murmured. "Leave it to me."

After some thinking, Glenn pulled out a vial of potion and gave it to Chris. "You smell bad. It's might be one of the side effects of cultivating Hematology. It attracts bugs. Try this, it might help."

Chris smiled at Glenn excitedly. "Are you gonna be a pharmacist? I have many drug materials in the laboratory, and I was considering whether to sell them at a low price. I'll give them to you when we're back."

Realizing Glenn's other identity, Robin approached him and asked: "Glenn, what can be made out using this?"

Glenn took the stuff Robin gave him and his palm quivered.

It was a crimson flower bud, as big as a baby's palm. In the center of the bud was an eye, rotating as if observing. And around it there were some things moving, like some feelers or blood vessels.

"It's the Evil Eye Kasmira." Glenn burst out.

"Evil Eye Kasmira?" The team asked at the same time. The bud belonged to Robin but it was the team who found it during an exploration in the forest.

Glenn gulped, and then rejoiced. "Evil Eye Kasmira is a core

ingredient in making a very deadly poison. It's a rare plant. Near extinctive. I once read it in a book."

"Poison?" Robin, who had no interest in poison, showed an obvious disappointment.

However, Glenn's eyes were wide.

After four years of purposefully exposing himself to toxic substances, Glenn had become nearly immune from non-deadly poisons. He knew that in another year or so, he would have difficulty in finding the toxins appropriate to his body.

However, with this Evil Eye Kasmira as a key ingredient, Glenn could cook up that deadly poison and this would spare him five years of searching the right poison. When the day finally came, his body constitution would have reached at least 100 points. If he had a chance in taking advantage of the underground dragons, coupled with some constitution-enhancing sorcery, he might eventually become a level one Lianti sorcerer.

This sped-up process would be owed to Glenn's "double evolution" property—the lymph and Gadflies. Glenn's body was more adaptive to substances with the same toxicity, and had higher evolution efficiency. Average poison Lianti sorcerers would have to calculate precisely the efficacy of the poisons, and then the concoction, among other preparatory steps before exposing themselves to poisons. And the process usually took months or even years.

In Glenn's case, the first stage cultivation would be done using a tenth of the time it would take normally—the fastest in the field of Lianti using toxin: Fastly getting poisoned, strong adaptive process, immune capability strengthened, fast recovery, and then he would be able to undergo another round of Lianti.

Thinking about this, Glenn held out a bead Quiet Spring gave him, and threw it to Robin. "This Evil Eye Kasmira is useful to me. I need it. And this bead contains an evil spirit. Let's make a

trade."An evil spirit?" Robin exclaimed excitedly, showing disbelief.



# Chapter 76: The Traces of Stigmata Valley

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Along the way, Glenn was tacit and stayed behind Lafite like he was her shadow.

He was not keeping quiet only trying to stay low-key. The other major reason was his infirmity after having gotten poisoned. And yet he was flipping through pages on water and radium elements.

"Am I being a little bit too quiet with Lafite on my side?"

Everyone in the team just let Glenn be in his solitude except for Robinson. He kept pestering him with petty talks, even mentioning the possibility of his marriage with Robin.

The scene reminded himself of Violent Bear, Iron Axe and Iron Hammer—All garrulous guys. Maybe Robinson could make friends with them.

Night fell.

Robin summoned her boar, and then she patted this bodyguard in the back, saying: "The aura he gives off is enough to scare off the predatory animals in this forest. Besides, my green-eyed monkey will be on watch. We all can have a good rest."

Having said that, Robin entered the newly-pitched tent she and Robinson shared, and within seconds, the sounds of Robinson yelping came out. He might have been under her bullying again.

In Glenn tent, he was studying the water element under the light of the Inextinguishable Flame and was trying to inscribe the basic water element magical matrix in his mind using his mental strength. He looked serious and sedate. All of a sudden, Lafite pushed aside the tent flap and got in.

She ignored Glenn and stripped off her clothes—all of them.

Glenn eyed her, yet made no response.

Lafite pulled out a vial of liquid vibrating with life wave, and

attentively sprayed some on where her smooth and damaged skin met to water a growing tender shoot. After it was done, Lafite looked at Glenn whose eyes were fixed on her, and grunted: "Am I a log to you?"

She said that in a sorrowful tone.

A puffing sound followed.

Glenn sniggered. "Lafite, my queen. You're not a log. I am. Even I'm touched by your beauty, as numb as a log I am."

"Hmm." Lafite shot a glance at Glenn, half smiled. "Forget it. You won't have any interest in me with my face looking like this. Get out of the way and I'm going to bed." Her voice was a mixture of nonchalance and yearning.

Glenn walked to her and pecked her in the forehead, saying lightly: "You have a good sleep. I'll join you soon."

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The Traces of Stigmata Valley.

The school that was closest to the great valley was the Ivory Castle School of Sorcerers, and next in line was the Black Isotta and the Hourglass School. The Bone Bell Tower School, the Umbra School, and the Compass School were located farther.

As Glenn and his teammates stepped onto the land of the Ivory Castle School, a crack troop of the Ivory Castle had already arrived at the Traces of Stigmata Valley, followed by an elite squad formed by students from the Black Isotta and the Hourglass. The majority of participants from the Ivory Castle would be mobilized.

Lafite gathered intelligence from an Ivory Castle student. Actually, it was more than a list of the nine schools of the 19th section.

There was the Lilith's, the school Glenn was supposed to be learning magic at, and the South Ridge School, Tibetan Eye School,

Glasswago School, Thunder Sawtooth Shaman School, Chiba Gate School, Kwong Ching House School, Avasaiakira Parterre School, and the Big Ben School.

Generally, these nine schools carried a brighter image, while the names of the 12th section schools were gloomy, depressing, cruel and mysterious.

However, Glenn cared was only interested in whether it belonged to one from the 19th section. That was what mattered.

The majestic mountain range trek was an arduous activity for students who couldn't fly, and even more so when they carried a large bag of interjections.

Since the mission was to occupy resource points, then defending them would also be an issue when they succeeded in taking them down. With these interjections, the resource points would then be better protected. Besides, only a small part of the follow-up force who had weaker combat capabilities would be required to stay for the defense.

Otherwise, the resources captured by the enemy immediately occupied again; what would be the point in that?

Of course, taking advantage of the interjections was not the only approach in terms of guarding the resource points.

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Trudging on Daqipeng mountain for a long time, Anna had been gasping from the exhaustion. She clenched her teeth and forged ahead step by step in her crawl on the range, because she did not wish to be a burden of the team.

Green, on the contrary, had almost recovered his physical stamina and was not feeling any discomfort. Catching Anna having trouble hauling in this mountain road, Glenn discontinued the basic inscription of the water elements magic matrix.

Glenn walked down to Anna and rapped the bag on her back. As

he touched it, a repulsive force was produced from Glenn's body, and the next second, the bag slowly floated up, hovering.

"What a wondrous magic! Thanks, Glenn." Anna exclaimed to Glenn joyously, showing an admiring expression.

Glenn motioned to catch up with the other team members. And the group continued wading through the snow-covered range in big strides.

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Three days later, the team had crossed the snow mountain and arrived at an expansive grassland. The mountain snow melted into a stream flowing from their side. Above them was the blue sky and white clouds, as well as a flock of geese with pointed beaks flying as high as several thousand meters, towering the mountains that surrounded the team.

This is the Traces of Stigmata Valley.

Lafite spread the map on the ground, studied it for a while, and then she chanted a spell silently. Soon a life energy was infused into the land at her feet, and a blade of grass on the land seemingly "awakened".

"What sorcery is this?" Glenn wondered.

The blade of grass before Lafite then rose to the waist height of a human in a short period of time. Its leaves unfolded and revealed a bud within it, and in the next second, an unnamed creature flew out of it. Upon closer observation, it was actually a translucent, near invisible fist-sized baby bee; only, it had human facial features, albeit somewhat disfigured.

This strange, little creature flapped her pair of transparent wings, fanning a little bit of the wind elements, and flew around Lafite.

Lafite held out her hand, letting this weird little creature slowly fall on her palm and asked. "Where is the center of this Traces of

Stigmata Valley?"

The little thing was just a thin film of element and after showing a thoughtful expression, its arm pointed to one direction.

Lafite smiled, and transferred some life energy into its body. This small creature suddenly became happy as if it had been fed to satisfaction and soon fell asleep in her palm. From time to time, it unconsciously kicked its two hind legs, like a child in shallow sleep.

Lafite gently placed this translucent little thing into the bud, and then this large grass slowly shrunk to its original form.

"Let's move. Our mission is in there. Do not let the 19th students get there before us." Lafite pointed in one direction.

The team galloped. Although students from their side—the Ivory Castle, the Black Isotta, the Hourglass—had sent first troops to the resource points, but they would target 15 ones at the very center of the valley, leaving the 35 resource points scattered in the front line uncovered. If occupied by the 19th students, there would be trouble.

At least by far, Glenn had subconsciously taken them as opponents at his own level...

"Glenn, do you know why Traces of Stigmata Valley is named as such?" Robinson asked Glenn proudly as he kept running. Even in his dash to the destination, Robinson couldn't stop talking.

Glenn shook his head and asked: "What's the story?"

Seeing Glenn didn't know the answer, his proud look became even more apparent, his face beaming with joy. "It's said that in ancient times, a Stigmata sorcerer died and fell to this place. When he landed, it caused a huge impact, destroyed a large part of the Bramble Forest and formed this valley. As a result of this sorcerer's dead body, this valley became a treasure trove of resources and had been developed jointly by the sorcerers from both of the 12th and

the 19th."

Glenn was stunned!

"Taking the impact of a Stigmata sorcerer's dead body, and a valley this huge was shaped? I am afraid to say an ordinary Stigmata sorcerer would not have such a powerful force!"

Robinson catching sight of Glenn's stunned face, his proud was indescribably palpable.

But...

Soon, Glenn's originally shocked expression slowly transformed into a sad and painful one...

A Stigmata sorcerer seldom appeared in the sorcerer world, the place which bred the sorcerer civilization, not to mention to be engaged in a fight. Of course they would face conflicts and the irreconcilable conflicts would then lead to war, as the sorcerer world is a competing world.

However, fights that involved Stigmata sorcerers would usually occur outside of the sorcerer world. And in this place, it would commonly be level three sorcerers fighting each other with the purpose of dismantling the sorcerer tower and thus reducing their opponents power amplification.

To kill a Stigmata sorcerer in this sorcerer world?

All that Glenn could think of was the second world war where the sorcerer civilization was at its the lowest point, where people died in droves and blood ran like rivers. It was the darkest time. Stigmata sorcerers and Necromancy sorcerers in countless numbers died in defense of the sorcerer land and its civilization...

Seeing Glenn's sadness, Robinson thought he was disappointed at his own ignorance. Thus, he sped up and ran to the head of the team.

Chapter 77: Bright Sorcerer and Dark Sorcerer

Glenn, Chris, Robin lay prone two kilometers off the tungsten ore range. Along with them was Lafite. Half-kneeling, she turned one of her eyes to Eagle Eye and looked across to Robinson, who had approached the site alone for a quick scout.

In terms of sorcery, Glenn's team was only second to the squad teams sent to the resource points before them, but they still had no idea whether this tungsten ore range had been taken by students from the 19th and whether there would be an ambush. Thus, they had asked Robinson, who excelled in skills of spying, hiding and escaping, to sneak a quick look.

Moments later, Lafite became relieved; the leaves that were produced around her to serve as camouflage were dispelled, and the bow put aside. "The site is all green. It seems to have been taken by our squad team."

Upon hearing this, Glenn and the others rose up and Robin said delightedly: "Brilliant, we've finally got some good teammate, and the mission will become a lot easier."

The squad team, jointly composed of students from the Ivory Castle, the Hourglass, and the Black Isotta, would surely be an elite team.

Glenn's group proceeded with a slow march to the site with Robinson as the guide. Soon a mine pit several meters deep came in view. It was a place where ravines and gullies criss-cross. At the bottom of the pit stood two teams of students around ten in number from different schools.

One team looked unfamiliar to Glenn's team yet the sight of the other team's leader made Lafite grimace.

It was Ardas, the Brightness Sword, ranked as the 5th in the top

ten students in the Black Isotta.

Lafite made a step forward, and shouted to them: "We are from the Black Isotta. We don't have any badges." One half of her face was a beauty and the other was withered. As she spoke those words, her voice attracted much attention and nearly none of them showed any manner of disrespect.

"Hmm, if you had any, you would all be dead for sure." A student in a cloak stood out. He then continued,

"I'm Yates from the Ivory Castle. This is Ardas, from the Black Isotta. I've heard some of the names you mentioned. But how would you identify yourself since we haven't met before. So just stay out of this pit until you have a way to prove your identity."

Lafite's face fell, but she and the others had nothing to retort with.

At present, beneath Ardas' well-aligned brows, his eyes were startled. Afterwards, he held out his hand; a gold bracelet around his wrist as well as several shiny rings on his fingers.

The ornaments seemed to be some fancy magical tools, containing some in-containable magical waves.

"No need to be outside now. I know this mask guy." Ardas said lightly. "The Ashen Mask Glenn whose name is on the hunted list. Interesting..."

Lafite turned to look at Glenn, but Glenn, having stayed close behind Lafite, didn't even look up and was focusing on the twigs in his hand, showing no intention of engaging in conversation.

Glenn would be immersed in doing his own stuff and when Lafite was around, he would always keep a low profile. The group members all knew this. It seemed his interest in some research never ended.

Maybe Glenn's spirit was what was circulated in the sorcerer community — How hard you tried decided your achievement. This

little saying was well-said, yet seldom could students really practice it. And this proverb showed the mentality of how the predecessors (the future self) regarded the successors (the past self) — with sarcasm and sighs.

Lafite began leading the team down the slope towards the bottom. They were stunned by the sudden appearance of a shrieking mouse. Seconds later, they realized that it was a safeguard.

Thump!

Glenn’s group dropped their bags on the ground. Lafite the walked to Yates and Ardas, and said lightly: "I’m Lafite from the Black Isotta. It’s my hope we work together in laying these interdictions we brought as quickly as possible."

"Interdiction?" Yates shifted his gaze to the bags. He then smiled. "Good...Since you have the interdiction, you’ll be given some say in matters concerning this resource point."

Ardas, however, was studying this mysterious, taciturn Glenn, eyes narrowed. He was lost as to why someone like Glenn would willing to be a footman under Lafite.

"To be on the hunted list, he must be as good as to be a threat to the heads of the top four leagues in the Black Isotta. He could stand out from his fellows and there were legends about him that..."

Ardas’ eyes turned more serious, thoughtful.

This woman was incredible to be able to harness such a powerful "footman". Besides, sorcerer students still had some taste in partners, and Lafite was too ugly to be liked by him. She must then be treated with some respect.

Thinking about this, Ardas smiled, and whipped back his long golden hair. "No problem. We’ll try and be cooperative."

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Laying the interjection in a wide scope was troublesome. The advantages were the help offered by 12 other students and that no enemies were in sight. Thus, the building was expected to be completed in three days.

As Glenn was busy with installing the magical stones, he caught a glimpse of something. It was a dreadful scene. Inside a ditch lay a heap of over 20 strewn student bodies.

After having measured a calculation formula of the repulsive and attractive forces, Glenn took off and flew to the bodies.

"The badges have been taken." Glenn murmured, thinking it reasonable that the culprit did this. "Since I knew about the badges, there is no reason why Yates and Ardas don't know them. And since these top students are collecting them, the other ordinary students are guessing their use..."

"It appears you have some knowledge about the badges. But these guys' badges were taken by Ardas and me." Yates said to Glenn in a husky voice.

Glenn didn't show much care. And Yates could not catch any change in expression from Glenn beneath his Ashen Mask, except for his composed eyes.

"Are these students in the 19th well-versed in battles?" Glenn asked calmly.

Yates made a giggling sound, and then said slowly. "Clumsy."

Glenn was struck dumb. "These more than 20 corpses were the squad team sent from the opponent schools. Then they must be among the best. And yet they were just "clumsy" in Yates' words, were they? Were they really as weak as Quite Spring implied?"

Suddenly, a powerful thunder wave broke out from the sky above this tungsten ore range. Glenn and Yates, who were chatting casually, stopped their work with the interjection, and took to the skies where the wave occurred.

In the sky, about 30 meters above the ground, a student wearing a pointed hat showed himself. Several thunder snakes moved about around his body. In his hand was a magical stick made of some old tree branch, and on the top end of the stick was a sapphire. The thunder waves were turbulent, and Glenn estimated that this guy was at least at the same level with the top ten students in the Black Isotta.

And Glenn noticed the badge on his chest.

This student's attire, his BBCAP in particular, was reminiscent of how Apollo in the Bi Seer city was dressed, which was very different from the cloaks in the 12th section.

"You're the Black Sorcerers from the 12th section, are you? You're filled with evil auras just as my tutor said." The thunder snake student sneered at the crowd of students.

"What Bright Sorcerer, Dark Sorcerer? There are only Evil-Hunting Sorcerers and Ougi Sorcerers." Yates jeered back, and his eyes were scanning around the student.

A proud and loud laugh followed. Afterwards, this 19th student whisked the stick in his hand and a purple electronic light moved as if it were a live snake.

"Such topnotch control..."

"Haha, my tutor said we had something to learn from you students from the 12th and asked us to participate such a boring tower master game. But rest assured, I'm not the fools you've destroyed. Come on, let me see the power of the 12th, who is gonna rise to my challenge?" The 19th student's face was arrogant, crazy and ferocious.

All of the students below at the ores became stunned and exchanged scared looks with each other as if they had seen the most unbelievable thing in the world.

However, the next second, the students from Glenn's side all

made a move on the guy in the sky at the same time as if it had been planned.

Glenn produced the fire bat sorcery, Lafite the life arrow, Robin the ice arrow and Yates...

Over 20 sorceries that carried a different level of strength were fired to the guy and the elemental forces soon engulfed the surprised student from the 19th.

"You despicable lot..." His voice had become weak and stifled. Then an enfeebled thunder force scuttled.

Yates, Ardas and Lafite turned themselves into three lights and chased.

Moments later, the three guys had come back, Ardas sneered and dropped a body into the corpse ditch.

"Is this the stupidity Quite Spring referred to? He is just so rash and brainless. Back in the Sorcery Test for the First-Years, I did not take such suicidal actions even when I was still stronger than you." Thought Glenn.

## Chapter 78: “The Seamen Group”

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Lafite, Yates, Ardas and the others were working within the outer layer of the interjection. Suddenly they looked out, eyes surprised.

An army of students from the 19th were tramping towards them. There must have been about 200 of them.

They were overwhelmed.

Chris was shocked, holding an axe in his hand. "Why so many?"

Chris' shock was understandable. The total number of the Black Isotta students was a mere seven or eight thousand. Even Glenn's team would be reinforced. But the students would not gather in hordes; they would be spread thin across the 200 resource points. And for this current point, there were only two dozens or so.

Ardas looked out at the marching enemy with his sharp eyes as he unsheathed the long sword on his back. As he gripped the sword, his whole body was giving out gray lights and his long hair became weightless as if he had been possessed by some God.

The humpback Yates smirked gloomily as the stick in his hand sent a round of waves. The next second, thunder resounded and a huge cloud of dust kicked up. From within the obscuring dust appeared a five-meter-long giant. It rose up with the support of its two 2-meter-long arms. Its eyes were like two huge crystal balls, gleaming gray.

The giant looked about before roaring. The next second, a hundred thickly-dotted stone spikes were protruding from within his back in the shape of a turtle shell.

Yates jumped on the shoulder of the giant without much effort. With a stamp of his foot, another wave was given off, following which a three-meter-long dark element sword appeared in the giant's hand. Its aura was icy as if it was sucking in the lights in the

vicinity.

Glenn, who was behind Lafite at the moment, became dumbfounded at this sight, and ceased the inscription of the water element in the matrix in his mind.

"This element animated animal..."

Inspiration struck Glenn and, at the same time, the old, simple and entangled knowledge framework of element animated animals exploded in his mind as a new one began to form.

No one could ever discern what was ongoing in Glenn's mind who was still behind Lafite's back; he was a supporting role, a manservant even!

All of the students were in battle formation and Ardas, shrouded in the lights, glimpsed at Lafite's team and said lightly: "Take it easy. Think of them as little soldiers of the human world. They are fools with nothing but theories."

"Easier said than done. There are 200 of them. Maybe this time..."

The over 200 students from the 19th section spent some time coming into battle formation. And then they marched in an impressive parade towards Glenn and the others to deter them and even make them surrender in this imposing manner.

Glenn didn't know that traditionally, in the 19th section, this imposing manner played an important role in the ring fights. However, in the 12th, there was no such thing as the ring fight, nor was there surrender. It was either live or die.

"Ardas, look. Those fools are just coming in this stupid way. I wonder if there is something wrong with their heads and if they have even been in a real fight." Yates who was standing on the giant's shoulder shrilled. He had gotten too excited.

Lafite hovered in the air fluttering a pair of wings. "Were those dead students as silly as them?"

Ardas made no response but snorted. Then he turned his eyes to the coming students as if they were alien creatures.

Glenn also thought it incredible for the 19th section students to make an offense against them with no reconnaissance, no outposts, and without long distance sorcery attacks — apparently, they had no strategies.

Upon seeing this, Robinson's despair suddenly turned optimistic. "They're entering the interjection traps."

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"Everyone, stay in your position. Let us teach the Dark Sorcerers a lesson. These Dark Sorcerers must have gotten so frightened to the point of peeing a little. Haha..." The leader of the charging students smiled.

A female student in the troops responded. "Right. And we're proving to the students who have come to the 19th section schools before us. Proving to them that we're strong and we're gonna save some face for them. The Dark Sorcerers are obsessed with internal strife and know nothing about the power of unity."

"We've been working so hard for all these years and we've got one "lord" among ten students now and even the rulers. We'll definitely destroy those foolish Dark Sorcerers. It's said they have this "top ten ranking" in their school. How naive they are!" Another student continued.

Another one from the crowd yelled. "I heard that there is a sorcery test for the first year students in the 19th where the participants could kill their partners and get magical stones in return. They're too ignorant as to have more knowledge than magical stones, which only play accessory functions..."

A rumbling sound exploded.

The speaker was not even finished when an electric light exploded in them and a rune interjection flashed in the air,

followed by about a dozen fire balls and then several dozens of icy balls...

"It's an interjection. They laid interjections. These cowards have no courage to fight heads-on. Full retreat, full retreat."

"Shit...It's the swamp sorcery. Flight sorcery guy come help me..."

"My legs are sinking..."

"I don't wanna die..."

"Ray, I don't wanna die..."

Chaos befell the formation where most of the students scrambled in dreadful disorder. The delicately woven "unity" broke. And some even suffered from hematophobia and collapsed on the ground.

If anyone from the 12th section had hematophobia, he or she would have been eliminated before having a chance to take the Sorcery Test.

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The dark elements in Yates' hand converged and became a long spear. He hurled it at the fleeing students faraway and leered strangely. "Destroy you all arrogant fools."

Making a whizzing sound, Ardas dashed towards the chaotic enemies like a bolt of lightning, followed by his own men.

Yates controlled the giant and moved making booming sounds, followed by his men.

"Charge—" Robin shouted as she rode her boar rushing forward with the monkey on her shoulder.

"My wife, be careful. Wait for me." Robinson followed fast.

Chris grinned, baring his white teeth. "Glenn, you protect my sister. I'll do the killing for you. Haha..."



Glenn smiled and then his eyes went lost again. The inspiration he got from the giant was not fully "digested" yet and thus he dared not to dawdle. This inspiration could expedite the birth of his element animal activation sorcery by a year.

Lafite whirled about with her element arrows; Chris was slaying heads in the enemy's formation with Nina chanting spells and resupplying magical power to him relentlessly. Nina also learned several other auxiliary sorceries and Glenn could feel he was being protected by a thin film of earth element.

Glenn's mental strength was in a hysteric state deriving from the element activation, and with a casual wave of hand, a student's badge was drawn to him under precise control even though he hadn't been in the actual killings.

"Glenn, given the current situation, you'll not be needed in the rear. You go for the badges. They seem important. I'll stay and protect Nina," said Lafite who had shot a dozen consecutive arrows from the rear.

Lafite had no idea that Glenn was staying in the rear just to save time to improve himself and thus could be more prepared for the Holy Tower trials, the most glorious award for sorcery students—Not just for the oath he took.

Glenn smiled, though the smile was invisible to Lafite as it was beneath the Ashen Mask. "Nope, I'll be here for your protection. Having 100 badges gathered will be enough and there is still time." Glenn then sank into the making of element animals.

Anna stuck out her tongue in a cute way. And Lafite just left Glenn alone after hearing him saying that, and continued with her shooting.

It was an unbelievable scene of 20 students chasing around over 200!

One reason was the devastation wrought on the 19th students by

the interjections, and the second was their cowardice. They simply fled in disorder after experiencing the explosions and had no guts to fight back by making use of their sorceries.

Suddenly, Lafite and the others had a notion about the event playing out before them:

The 12th students were actually the Seamen group—cruel knights—back on the ship and the seemingly strong 19th students were the little students before the Death Sail league was established!

# Chapter 79: The Mad Woman

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Almost 100 dead bodies were littered before the students.

Yates, Ardas and Lafite dragged these bodies into the ditch and buried them crudely to prevent the rancid stink.

Along with the bodies was a pile of magical tools, which attracted no attention from Yates and Ardas. Ordinary tools were basically worthless to students as strong as them. Others like Lafite however, whose mental strength hadn't reached 40, picked a few gadgets from the heap. Glenn chose a ring whose function was the same as his necklace—raise the value of mental strength under 40 by two points.

At the time, Lafite's mind was racing with thoughts.

"The 12th students were the cruel seamen group and the 19th students were the little students back on the ship. Then what if the better skilled students survived the hunting by us and formed some organization like the Death Sail League? Would they launch a comeback? Or could they at least rival us as equals? If so, a real war would break out since the Black Isotta tasked us with taking no less than 30 resource points." Thought Lafite. "There is no way to unite the 12th students. They grew to be against unity, to be with their different mentality. And yet the 19th could achieve this because they have no internal conflicts."

Thus, Lafite's worries could be said to be understandable. But soon something distracted her from her thoughts.

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"Us two are Compass Schoolers. Why are you doing this to us?" A bossy female voice came down from the ore slope.

The woman's clothes could barely cover her, whose figure was in great shape. Her long hair was fluttering in the air, and her eyes overbearing.

Glenn was studying the radium element in his oblivion when he raised his head upon catching that voice.

"Isn't she Mina, the domineering, tyrannic Daughter of Sun from the Gory test?"

Glenn could still remember this Mina from the Compass School till this day. She had fought alone against the most gifted students of the Black Isotta. People were impressed by what she was capable of and Glenn himself nearly died because of her. But one virtue of knowing her was that he had gotten her Body of Flame.

This woman was an enhanced version of Lafite!

Then Yate's murmuring voice came from the slope. "You say you are from the Compass, who can prove that?"

"No need for that!" A female voice rang out from behind Mina. The sight of everyone on the scene grew dim. The next second, the bulk of the stone giant cracked and then exploded with a booming sound. Broken icicles scattered throughout the surrounding air, and the area turned cold.

Yates was quick enough to turn himself into a beam of black smoke and reappeared several dozen meters away. He looked at the site where he was at with a shocked face.

It was the giant's hand that had been hit and smashed by an icicle, leaving only the arm being swallowed by the cloud of ice.

Yates quivered at the sight of this. With such formidable power, she must be the perennial first-place holder of the top ten students of the Black Isotta—Milly, the Ice Age.

The top ten students of the Black Isotta are tiered into three levels.

The lowest level was for the last five students on the list. The best capability could be brought out was Glenn in his prime before he obtained the gifts of Bionna and Kyrie and before he intentionally exposed himself to the poisons.

The second level was basically the leaders of the four major leagues in the school, who could deal with the schools' protectors.

As for the highest level, only two students were graded into this class in the last nine batches of students enrolled in the school. Despite the two students being unable to match a real sorcerer's ability to harness natural forces, they could stand on an equal footing with level-one underground Lianti sorcerers in terms of their comprehensive capabilities. There was one thing worth mentioning: underground Lianti sorcerers couldn't harness natural forces and natural forces were not able to cause harm to them.

It could be summarized that in the absence of sorcerers, they would be the protector of the schools. And Ice Age Milly was one of the two best students.

"Impossible. Ice Age Milly? Such a mighty student would be sent to the 15th resource point by those great sorcerers. Why would you be here?" Yates asked doubtfully in a shrill voice.

"Oh? You know me then?" The gloomy Milly became nonchalant.

"Ha, I don't know you though. Forget it, save the introduction for later. The center resource point has got that guy for the protection. I'm not happy with him but he is more than able for the defense. Anyway, I came here for my sister."

"Your sister?"

Milly had attracted Ardas' attention, who had instantly recognized her. Currently, he was gazing at this good-figured, red-haired, arrogant and cool girl.

Glenn and the others were not able to determine how strong the two students were except for the fact that they were strong.

Only Lafite among the group had recognized Mina because she had once used the Golden Eye to lock her and thus remembered her. She just hadn't gotten the chance to speak it out.

"You're the Bright Sword Ardas?! Your wings of light are fabulous." Milly scanned the crowd and spoke to the fifth-ranked Ardas.

Ardas replied solemnly. "They could save my life."

Mina snorted, and then said lightly: "Why can't we..." With the sentence half finished, she stopped suddenly, and said joyously: "Glenn?"

"Eh?"

Glenn finally recognized Mina. "Why was she being happy seeing me here. I took the prize reserved for her in the Test ."

Mina greeting Glenn surprised the rest of the crowd who all then turned their focus to him.

After the greeting, Mina was then about to walk to Glenn when she was halted by Milly, who asked: "What's this about?"

"He's my boy. He's the only one that could catch my eyes among the six schools. The guy I talked about all the time," said the tyrannical Mina as if Glenn was her property.

Milly responded coldly. "To be in a relationship with him? That's not good...If either one of a spouse couldn't make it to become a sorcerer, then the other one would be alone forever. I won't allow..."

"Sister, this is my personal affair. Please stay out of this," said Mina. "Even if he couldn't be a sorcerer, I'll keep him for the moment and won't give anyone else any chance, because he's mine. Mine."

Afterwards Mina strode to Glenn, ignoring the existence of the crowd as if they were just there presenting a more attractive Glenn.

Lafite, Chris, Anna, Robin and Robinson all grimaced and Lafite turned back to Glenn, eyes staring at him.

She didn't say anything but her eyes were asking: "What's going on? Why would she say that?"

Glenn of course couldn't have known how Mina had feelings about him back in the interrogation room. He was awkward in romance—He didn't know how Lafite fell in love with him in the first place, not to mention this Mina who didn't play by the playbook. But in Glenn's defense, insensitivity in romance was an issue many sorcerers faced.

However, to have Glenn was not a romance but a mere possession of a sort of collection.

Mina continued pacing towards Glenn and as she was just several steps away, Lafite and the others had gotten ready to launch a strike.

At the time, an arcane reaction rocked both Mina and Glenn.

Mina halted. She and Glenn showed an intoxicated expression almost immediately. Then the two of them went sober again and exchanged an incredible look.

This attraction force...

It was the attraction force produced between two Body of Flame—A wondrous attraction.

"Body of Flame would be drawn to each other?"

If Mina were Lafite, then this attraction would be fantastic. But...

Having realized this, Glenn clenched his fist and turned serious. "My will is not gonna bend to instinctive reactions because of a gift."

"Impossible! Is it the Body of Flame?" Mina grimaced, glaring at Glenn like a devil. "Impossible. Why are you giving out the aura of Body of Flame? I'm the only one that has it. You are such an imposter. I'll not allow you to live in this world. I'm gonna kill you."

Merely seconds had passed, and Mina eyes towards Glenn had shifted from joy to panic and hatred. This change seemed unreasonable to the rest of the crowd.

"Bionna was right about her. She is indeed a mad woman."

Glenn grimaced. "This is not a good timing to be in a fight. I'm in the weakest state after getting myself poisoned. My battle strength is half as strong compared to my normal state. Maybe just barely at Lafite's level."

Chapter 80: True Pride

A thousand ideas flashed through Glenn's mind and he chose the safest and most conservative one—to use the Glenn Dissimilation Sorcery.

Glenn immediately altered part of his Life Code using the Dissimilation Sorcery and the Body of Flame properties were then covered up in his body. This way, he and Mina would not be emotionally attracted anymore.

Like a smaller-sized sun had been set off, Mina was charging towards Glenn in a cloud of fire which emitted blazing lights and scorching heat. Her eyes had turned red and her surrounding air was puffed up with strong magical waves—even though the attraction had disappeared, she was still bent on burning Glenn to ashes.

Confronting such strong magical waves, Chris, Robin and Robinson made an immediate response. Chris turned into a wolf, eyes turning green, teeth bared, and axe held before his chest. Robin summoned the boar and fished out a fist-sized fiery red bead, the one she got in the trial test. Robinson gulped down a vial of medicine and the next second he was gone, leaving a ball of dark drifting air.

Glenn stared at this mad woman Mina who had the Body of Flame. She was once the strongest in the trial test and she almost got him killed.

Glenn's long, golden hair as well as his cloak were rustling in the heat waves and his eyes glimmered with a dazzling light. And due to the heat, his Ashen Mask began to consume his magical force.

With a thumping sound, Glenn's magical stick fell to the ground. He then said lightly: "Mina, this is not what you were faced with in the trial. I'm not an escaper any longer. And you..."

"Haha! Are you? Glenn, you've finally got the confidence to go against me?"

Mina cut in and laughed with great hubris. "If so..."

"Stop! Mina, you make a step further, I promise you this will be your burying place." Lafite jerked Glenn behind her like before in the ship.

All of the attention was focused on the golden key Lafite was holding high. It was emitting strong space waves, and the lights and heat were even beginning to eclipse Mina's.

"The Stigmata Friendship Key." Yates exclaimed shrilled in his husky voice as she stared at Lafite.

Ardas had no idea what ability this key could perform but he was still amazed at the magical waves.

Mina had no knowledge of this friendship key. Even though it was giving out shocking waves she and her elder sister behind her were too confident to care for such a tool. She was being a little bit unreasonable, or silly to be precise.

Mina stretched out her hand slowly and was ready to have a big fight with Lafite's team.

"Mina, enough. Stop it." In a flash, Milly had moved in front of Mina and seized her hand.

Mina became shocked, and then she grimaced. "What're you doing? I'm killing him."

Milly narrowed her eyes and spoke, emphasizing every word. "I'm not allowing you to misbehave."

"Leave yourself out of this. I'm killing this guy today." Mina yelled.

"You haven't got the rare sign from your tutor, the Indistinguishable Flame, and you're just halfway through with the study of your father's element Ougi. Even your mental strength is

not at 40! You want me to teach you the rule of the sorcerer world?" Milly voice turned grim.

For a long time, stifling silence ensued.

"Fine. I'll go." Mina shouted as she threw off her sister's hand and left, showing no further interest in this ore range despite the fact that she still had a mission. She was headstrong like a spoiled child.

Milly's face looked similar to Mina's. Her distinguishing trait was her long silver hair, and she wore the standard 12th section students cloak. Interestingly enough, in the center of her forehead, there was a lozenge-shaped body of energy which seemed to contain a huge formidable force hidden within.

"Put it away The space waves will be used up in at best two more times. You wanna waste it on this?" Mimmy gazed at Lafite seriously but she appeared unthreatened as if she still had a trump card to play.

Lafite sneered. "In the trial test, people were saying Mina was a mad woman. Now it seems she lives up to it." Lafite teased Milly as she put the key away.

"It's none of your business." Milly flashed a glare at Lafite grimly.

The two women were not happy with each other yet they restrained themselves to not to start a conflict.

Milly then whipped back her hair as she turned to face Glenn and then said to him with suppressed interest. "My sister's feeling was right, it is the aura of Body of Flame. No wonder she got crabby. You're somebody worth her attention! But would you mind telling me what was the "sorcery" you just pulled out?

Milly was not sure whether the secret behind his Body of Flame was due to Glenn's sorcery or his pure gift.

Glenn eyed this white-haired woman calmly. She was someone that many thousands of students in the six schools of the 12th

section worshipped. This woman's firm expression said that she would not give up until he gave her the answer.

Thus, Glenn finally opened his mouth. "The Glenn Secret Tri-Sorcery."

"You..." Milly paused. "You named a sorcery after your own name?"

Actually, Lafite and other team members were also kept in the dark about this. Exchange of knowledge would be conducted at the cost of magical stones, not to mention sorceries, which would only be passed on to their own students by the tutors.

Therefore Glenn's team were all surprised learning the news.

A student created a new sorcery?

This was an unbelievable thing that had never occurred in the 12th section at least. They would usually learn the established sorceries created by the ancient, wise sorcerers. No one would exert efforts to delve into the making of a new sorcery.

Yates and Ardas stared at Glenn, the guy who had remained in obscurity ever since he stepped into this place.

"What level he would be at given his capability?"

In retrospect, no one had ever seen Glenn fighting. He had always kept a low profile and saved every minute to conduct his research. He was a supporting role along the way, a wanderer, an autism sufferer. And even Ardas was putting much thought into why a mundane Glenn would be on the hunting list.

But now...

No matter how hard one might want to conceal his radiance, he would shine; like a gem in the mud that would surely be unearthed one day.

Yet it still baffled Yates and Ardas as to why Glenn was not willing to present himself to gain according fame and respect given

his strong capabilities and would rather stay quiet. Creating a new sorcery signified wisdom and knowledge, by which power would be obtained.

Glenn was standing there, still being quiet. He still had no intention to show off or anything. Apparently, he didn't give a damn as to what people called "status".

Yes, Glenn needed not to be understood, or cared to be understood.

His heart was there for the pursuit of his dream. He lived each day to the fullest with his aspiration. Solitude was a price. Reputation negligible. Hardships to be expected. Fatigue a must—Adversities were the fuel to one's spirits and fatigue made one feel the existence of one's body.

These were the fundamentals for a student to explore the future and make history, to become the most glorious, most powerful sorcerer. This was Glenn's pride.

Sorcerers with a strong heart needed not to be understood, or cared to be understood.

All along Glenn's aspiring goal was the Holy Tower tryouts. Win, and he would attain the highest glory and accordingly the highest prize. This glory would be conferred on an equal footing—not considering the level of a student would be at. It would be an occasion where true quality would be realized.

And this was the biggest secret Norris had divulged to Glenn, a secret that would be kept from most of the students.

Chapter 81: The Greedy Flame Giant

"When you're in the Holy Tower tryouts, don't let me down." Milly didn't take on Glenn by force and only said this. She had treated Glenn as one of the top ten students of the whole six schools.

Glenn went into shock. "You're expecting my performance? Are you numbed by your ice to say something so haughty?"

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Three months later.

"It's done." Murmured Glenn in his tent after having completed his meditation. He then held out a finger and a small water ball formed on it. Elements of water and fire were easily controlled and had great affinity. And when the two elements could be utilized using ten times of the lever power, then the Destructive Force of Fire Blast Sorcery could be started on.

But this shouldn't be on top priority. To research into the destructive force of the water and fire elements, one should start with the boosting function of two affinity elements.

And thus, Glenn chose to aim for water and radium. (the combination are supposed to be wind & fire, water radium, earth water, earth & life)

Glenn's affinity with radium was not strong, but he had two months of research on it and he was confident that he could accomplish the inscription of radium matrix in two months. By then, he could study the element boosting sorcery which was a rather difficult one and might cost years to be completed.

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"Glenn, are you gonna take part in the meeting?" asked Lafite from the other side of the tent who just was done with her knowledge learning.

For the last six months, the students from the six schools had all arrived at this range, and had executed numerous attacks at the 19th section. As a result, over 160 resource points had been occupied, and the remaining more than 30 were waiting to be exploited.

And when all of the points were occupied, then our enemies would have no battle base to gather the forces. When the time came, we would chase and kill them until they reached a number that the sorcerers of the 19th section wanted.

Glenn shook his head, and said lightly: "You know it. I'm not accustomed to being in such things. I'm fully reassured with you being our representative."

"En." Lafite nodded and then left the tent.

Over 100 students had arrived at this range, and four out of the top ten students of the six schools had also turned up—Milly, Yates, Ardas, and someone from the Bone Bell Tower School. The students also brought with them some interjections and had laid them in a dozen or so sites to make traps like the exploding mushroom. They also did the work of digging bomb shelters and a lookout.

Defenses-wise, this place was invulnerable.

A long while later, Lafite turned back to the tent and said lightly: "Milly and Ardas had led several teams of students out of this place. This range is no longer the frontline but an outpost."

"Sure, it's been quieter for the past month." Glenn fingered through his sorcery book notes as he responded casually.

For the past few months in this range, Lafite's wound had gotten much better. The withered skin on her face was recovering.

"Glenn, would the 19th section students build an organization like what we did with the Death Sail League? You know, when there were not many of them left."

"Certainly. Although we don't know what kind of punishment would be incurred if they lost this battle, the sorcerers on their side would urge them to spare no efforts. And they've got two advantages we don't have. One is unity and the other is that they could send out protectors for more times than we could."

Glenn had become a little drowsy with his sorceries. But he suddenly turned sober upon hearing this causal analysis, a thought coming to mind.

"Is there news of our side sending the protectors?" Glenn asked.

"No, we haven't. But our enemy has deployed them for six times. And the protectors killed four of our men, and another two managed to escape from them," answered Lafite indifferently.

Glenn's eyes brightened, and said: "Our enemy is using up their chances of dispatching the protectors. This might make them extremely vulnerable."

"Why is that?"

"You forgot? We set up the league in the ship under the leadership of the five lords. Without you and the four others, the students wouldn't be gathered. The key to it was a strong leadership." Glenn responded, emphasizing "five lords".

"Why are you being nostalgic? 'The five lords' was coined by some student who didn't even know a thing about sorcery. It was not us that created it!" Lafite added, "But if it were me, I wouldn't go with this Lord of Vine if I had a say in it. I'd call myself..."

"Stop there, my queen. Let's get back on the topic. Since there would be leaders in their organization, then we could send our protectors altogether to kill them all or at least most of them, then what would befall the students? It would be like the students in the ship without your five leaders..."

Lafite smiled and said: "Your analysis is very constructive! And unlike them, we 12th secon has no leaders at all. We encounter

fight, small and big, all the time, so there is this established creed—everyone is the leader of himself or herself."

"If I could think of this, then there is no reason Norris couldn't."

Lafite became relieved hearing this, and then she smiled. "It was seemingly bad luck when we were sent to this frontline in the beginning, and now the momentum has been turned. We could stay here and be at ease with the defense. And you personally could focus on experiments. You're living by the minute because of those sorceries. Wait a minute, let me think...you're supposed to be studying the two twigs?"

Glenn smiled and pulled out the two twigs.

Two months later, Glenn succeeded in inscribing the radium magical matrix and started tap into how water and radium could play a role of boosting.

One year passed by, the 12th section had taken hold of over 180 resource points and the target of each student occupying 30 points was reached. However, they were deterred by the protectors on the other side to launch further strikes. Besides, large scale offense were nearly impossible to carry out as they were restricted by the special relationships between the students—there was no strong leadership and no large scale offensives unless they were motivated by interests.

Skirmishes between the two sections surfaced from time to time but the 12th held absolute advantage. As time passed by, the 19th were being enlightened and formed a league called "20 Drops of Blood", which had become a topic among the 12th students, and under its organization and coordination, they were crawling back into the game.

Five years later, Glenn body constitution had reached 108 points. But his body had gotten used to the deadly Evil Eye Kasmira, and without a laboratory to develop new poisons, he ceased this cultivation. But he would spend some time each day to do some

physical activities to improve his physique, strength, and activity.

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Nine years later.

In this nearly forgotten ore range, about twenty students were in their defensive positions and Glenn's team also stayed in here to take care of Glenn who had been studying his sorcery.

The students here had been used to this safe and easy life in the rear. The battle was going on in the frontline. Not here. They would just need to be on daily patrols, checking the interjections and the traps. And two students had even married and had a simple wedding.

During the celebration, all of the students joined. Glenn had given the couple a spare vial of meditation medicine as a blessing gift.

No sight of 19th section students for three years. This place had become a pure home front.

One day in a clearing of the range, Glenn chanted the spells carefully trying to outline the element creature in his mind by using the method of "language resonance". Also by taking advantage of the "motivator", the fire element and knowledge about souls, the creature was around the corner.

In a fluctuation of magical waves, a creature made of dark fire gradually manifested.

It was like a newly born baby, looking around at the strange world. And this baby was emotionally connected to Glenn. It was a three-meter-high giant in the shape of an irregular human with a humpback. His armoured skin, which was made up of water and radium elements, flowed as the black flame blazed. His snail eyes were burning with a clearer light, and now it was scanning around cruelly. There was a huge mouth on either side of his body. One was deploring and the other was yelling.

Judged by the interaction in Glenn's mind, he began to assess his abilities.

"Basic physical offense power lies between 100 and 220 points. Element attack at around 170. The two mouths? En? One is to swallow souls? And the other was to eat hatred?

He could understand its ability to eat souls, because the motivator belonged to that "Devil Lord"—the creature from foreign lands who had the same ability. But why could it devour hatred? An ability related to emotions confused him.

However, with its basic physical properties, this new element creature would be ranked in the second level among the top ten students in the six schools. If its soul/hatred eating abilities could be explored...

Glenn watched and learned a follow-up ability of the element animal activation sorcery from Yates. After a strong vibration of magical waves. A two-meter-long, blue sword appeared in its hand.

Glenn stared at this element animal that he had spent eleven years building and then murmured. "From now on, you'll be called the Greedy Flame Giant. I'll explore your soul/hatred eating abilities some other day."

Element animals had their own slight, primitive will. It was the slightest enlightened part. The Greedy Flame Giant yelled in his mind.

Glenn dispelled his own giant and said, thoughtfully: "Since the boosting capacities of water and radium have been done studying, and the element animal is created. It's time to increase the nine-time lever function to ten and then it would be the Destructive Force of Fire Blast Sorcery."

"The two twigs are rare signs and will be etched in my soul. By then, I'll decide how to use radium based on the twig's properties."

Thinking about this, Glenn concealed his good mood, and spent

an hour patrolling around the perimeter as usual before returning to the tent. The physical exercise was reaping benefits in increasing his constitution too.

## Chapter 82: The Crater

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"Who is in charge at this resource point?" Asked one of the top ten students from the Umbra School, who had arrived at this tungsten ore range.

Lafite stepped forward and answered: "It's me. Lafite from the Black Isotta."

The student glanced at her, whose stunning grace—a sort of grace that came with an unrestrained domineering manner—flooded him. Following which he narrowed his eyes.

Lafite's withered skin had been healed after years of treatment. She had become a gracious queen again. And her character had become a little more cunning.

The student pulled out a map and chattered. "You take your men to reach here in five days." He pointed his finger at somewhere in the map. "The remaining few will be enough to guard this ore range."

"A center resource point?" Lafite got startled and then she murmured. "That '20 Drops of Blood' is getting stronger enough to have this final battle? Their members were behaving like fools only years ago."

"Experiencing a purgatory of killing, most of them have been wiped out. If it were not for the protectors, the rest of them would have no resource points in their hands and would have been crushed a long time ago. This war would also have ended." The student sneered.

Lafite replied, thoughtful. "Then the 12th section is mobilizing all of the forces to go here?"

"Nope, it's them that are doing this. We've occupied 180 points. The target of 30 points per school has been achieved. Thus it's unnecessary to commit such a sacrifice as raiding the remaining 20

points. They're doing it because, according to the intelligence of our men disguised on their side, they don't intend to lose the war and are making their last-ditch efforts."

All of the students on the range were startled.

It seemed that the 20 Drops of Blood had become unified, and was now a behemoth that could meet the 12th section as equals.

And this was a flaw in the organization of the 12th section students. No strong leadership deprived them of the chance to smash the enemies once and for all.

~~~~~

Tsha, tsha, tsha...

Lafite led her team along with other three students in running across an untraversed desert. The soft sands made melodic tsha sounds.

"Stop." Lafite motioned for the team to halt.

The team looked at Lafite whose eyes were watching the distant sky above.

They had no idea that in the distance skies, a bird small like a black spot was hovering above them. Nobody was paying any attention to it except for Lafite. She had the Eagle Eye!

"Something is wrong with this bird. It had been following us for an hour. I think we are being watched by the 19th. This route is not flanked by our resource points which makes it a perfect place to ambush," said Lafite slowly.

"Yeah, we're not going to view them in the old way. They are sorcery students. They learn. They were acting foolish because of their schools' system." Cut in Robin, riding on her boar. She then picked up a water bag for a drink, and then watered the boar.

Chris put in: "Lafite, what do we do now?"

After some thinking, Lafite said: "You guys keep changing

directions while moving forward in case of falling into their trap. I'll get that bird and then catch up to you. And Robinson, you go to the nearest resource point to bring a rescue team. Considering your speed, reinforcements will be with us in three hours."

Hearing the instructions, Robinson took out the map and said: "I'll try to achieve that in three hours!" He then continued. "My wife, keep in touch through the crystal ball."

Soon Robinson had disappeared with his mission in hand.

A pair of huge green leaf wings unfolded on Lafite's back, and she then straightened her upper body, targeted the bird and shot a whistling arrow.

The bird sensed the coming arrow and fled away immediately.

In the team, an Ivory Castle School student fished out a little magical stick and threw it into the air. As it landed on the ground, he murmured. "We go where the stick's tip points. We flip the stick every tenth of one hourglass. Basically, we're heading to our destination and they couldn't ambush us."

~~~~~

Glenn was also in the team yet he was busy with his study of water and fire, and he had become completely immersed in this complicated element knowledge. It was called the Fire Blast Sorcery because this was the most basic application of the forces produced by water and fire when met. In simpler words, when the more stable water element was added into the stable fire element, some sorcery would be used to unite the joint forces when the two elements met into one destructive force.

This rough use of energy was like when Elaine had detonated the magical stone without using the precise control through lever back in Glenn's first class at the Black Isotta. It was a shame to sorcerers known for the lever method.

But this simple method was the best the ancient sorcerers could

achieve in the area. The destructive force energy had their specialty and could not be collected through physical means and thus couldn't be studied in-depth.

But in Glenn's mind, even such a simple use contained the power of "prying up the lever", and this power was over 30 times greater than the effect that could be produced by basic mental force. If someone could create a more stable environment where water and fire elements blend, then the instantaneous destructive force would be even stronger. Besides, there was more potential in the force waiting to be tapped into.

Glenn was lucky to get this fire element sign with the indistinguishable property, so it wouldn't be put out by water! This provided a solid base for his study of the Fire Blast Sorcery.

Rejoicing greatly, Glenn just kept his head low while following the team as if he was a mechanical log.

For the past few years, Glenn had been behaving like this. Except for the few who were friends with him, no other students had had any conversation with him. The only information they knew was his Ashen mask, and that he and Lafite were a couple.

Half an hourglass of time passed, and the travel-worn Lafite landed on the ground before the team. "That eagle ran off." She grunted.

Another three hourglasses elapsed.

The team looked out to the reinforcement in the distance Robinson had brought and became relieved. This 20 Drops of Blood was a lot stronger than the 19th students before. The team began to feel pressured even though they had yet to confront them.

After having greeted the new arrivals, Lafite led the new team and ran to the war zone resource point.

A day later.

"Cross this hill, and we'll arrive at the Stigmata Canyon—the



very center of the Traces of Stigmata Valley. This place possesses the lion's share of the resources," said Lafite. "But this war wouldn't be counted by the resource quantities." Lafite encouraged the tired group.

The group trudged their way and arrived at the hillside in an hourglass. They sat down, had a rest and ate something. When they climbed to the top and got ready to go downhill, they were taken aback.

The other side of the hill was almost 1,000 meters deep and it was very steep with a slope of about 45 degrees. The slope was slippery with no plantation nor protruding rocks. And opposite to this hill was an ordinary hill without any features.

The hill ranges spread in rings in a radius of 10 kilometers and the farthest one met the Daqipeng mountain. This was a witness to the traces of the years of the sorcerer world.

"This is not a hill. It's a crater. Is this where that ancient Stigmata sorcerer fell?" Glenn thought

The fall of a Stigmata sorcerer caused such a great geological change, and this was the center of the Traces of Stigmata Valley—the Stigmata Canyon where resources abounded.

Now Glenn could be considered as having a preliminary understanding of the great powers. And this Stigmata sorcerer must have been top one of their class to have caused such damage.

# Chapter 83: The Proposal for Unity

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The slope was like many pieces of slates paved together. Lafite and the rest of the team got down on the slope and slid down to the bottom of the crater.

This Stigmata Canyon was the stronghold for the 12th section. As the final battle was coming, the number of students gathering was also mounting, and the estimated number was 30,000.

"Stop." Lafite motioned to the group.

Lafite floated off the ground on her wings of leaves slowly, and said: "The students here have spotted us. Let's wait for a possible checkup." The team stopped, looked up to her and nodded.

"It's weird." Nina murmured, who was sensitive to elements. "Fire and radium elements abound in here. And other elements are much less than normal."

Hearing this, the rest closed their eyes to feel the elements proportion in the air. And moments later all of them showed a surprised expression.

"Is this also because of that ancient Stigmata sorcerer? So many years have passed, and yet the geological environment is still being affected?"

A sharp intake of breath was heard.

Afterwards, the crowd gulped and Robin questioned. "It can...t be like this."

A student from the Ivory Castle retorted. "It's likely! It's a great sorcerer. Who knows what power he/she had."

~~~~~

Moments later, twenty students were diving towards them from the air. Suddenly they stopped and hovered to make sure there was no ambush and then launched into another charge.

Several dozens of meters away, a student straddling a groom shouted towards Lafite's team. "Which school are you from? Who sent you?"

"We are students from Black Isotta, Compass, Hourglass and Ivory Castle. It's a Compass student who asked us to come here." Lafite replied in an equally loud voice.

All of Lafite's team members understood the other side's caution. According to intelligence, there was ongoing infiltration from the 12th into the 15th. There was no reason why the 15th was not doing the same.

"Okay, wait here." The student in the air flew back to his camp on the groom.

Moments later, a team of over 20 came to them from the air and among them there were familiar figures. They were Alastair and Sam. Sam was fluttering his black wings in the air, and there was a drifting aura around his wings which helped him determine that those with Lafite were not moles.

"Lafite, the Death Sail League is getting intense without you. Where have you been?" Alastair had come before Lafite as Sam was inspecting the group.

"Has you fully recovered from the wound?" Alastair surveyed her.

Seeing students from the League, Lafite became much happier. "I've been guarding a rear resource point. Mostly idle. What about the front line? I heard the 20 Drops of Blood is getting stronger?"

Sam came to Lafite too. His eyes were like a thaw hole in ice, now become softer upon seeing his own people.

"This league is a little like the league you guys set up back in the ship. They're causing problems. The good news is that they have sent protectors several times and we haven't. "

Alastair smiled. "They can send for 11 times and we've 16 left. We

only used two."

"Is it really so?" Glenn who was behind Lafite thought.

~~~~~

Three days later.

This resource point was rich in radium stones. The student guards had been mining them for their own possession. Whether it be for sale or use as research material, these stones were valuable. Glenn extracted some too. He then ground them and put them in a tube for his future research of radium or alchemy. He was not in the mood of collecting too much of it though. His goal was the Holy Tower tryout in four years.

Time was limited. Glenn was not sure if he could pull off that Fire Blast sorcery before the tryout, even though he had been trying his best.

One fact was that given Glenn's power, he would almost certainly become a Demon-Hunter. Besides, since his mentor Norris once promised him that he would become one, he then must have some card to play to help Glenn with the goal. However, this title couldn't catapult him to that apex of glories.

Clomp, Clomp...

Heavy footsteps were heard, and soon a large student appeared before Glenn.

The girl was obese, but Glenn felt that her figure was burly. With a chain bola around the leather armour on her waist, she walked in an imposing manner. She gave off the image of primitive cruelty.

She was Bethany, who was once ranked the tenth in the top ten students of the Black Isotta. However, her ranking had risen to sixth place. The advancement was due to her thrilling actions in the war when a protector from the 19th section had targeted her yet she was able to escape.

"Glenn, I came because I heard you were dispatched here. If there was a final battle, would you be interested in joining us? I admire you for your capabilities."

Although Bethany was a female, she was not girly. She talked to Glenn as she sank to the ground with a thumping sound.

Glenn put away his tube, looked at Bethany and said: "It's not gonna happen. I'm tasked to guard a remote point for the past years, so I haven't had any chance to collect the badges. I intend to gather some in the near future."

"How many are you short on?"

Glenn was startled by the question. He then calmed down and answered lightly. "72."

"That many?" Bethany became hesitant. "The secrets about the badges have been revealed in here. Collecting them is almost impossible. I have some spare ones but 72 is too many and I've promised others to leave some for them. "

Glenn nodded casually. According to Varo, a badge was worth 1,000 magical stones. Thus 72 badges would equal 72,000, which was an astronomical figure. Bethany didn't push Glenn on this and she was not good at polite words. Therefore she simply turned away and left in big strides, followed by some others. Indeed, she didn't recognize many students' ability judged by the scope of her followers.

Everyone in the center point was busy preparing for the final battle. Stronger students were recruiting allies and followers, while the weaker ones were forming some smaller leagues. The atmosphere had gotten intense in this crater.

While the 12th section was outnumbered by the 15th section, having only half as many students as their enemy, but generally, they could rout them in terms of sorceries.

So, unless the 12th section made some critical mistakes, their

enemy stood no chance of winning. But the 19th section would also have to try to seize that slim chance to win. If they lost, it would result in a culling of their own students. The remaining would be the elites of the elites and the downsizing purpose would be achieved.

~~~~~

The members who were in the crater were gathered for a meeting.

"You really wanna do this alone?" Alastair scowled. "You won't contribute much in that decisive battle, and it'd be difficult to amass badges in large quantities. It's better for us to cooperate. Although I can't say I'd favor you much with the trophies, I'll promise you 20 badges."

At the time, there were only four elders in this resource point—Alastair, Lafite, Som, and Berg, along with 70 or 80 ordinary members.

Berg added. "You should join us, Glenn. Our league is formed recently. Except for Alastair, Sam, and others of the top ten, there's no real strong people, and that's why we have to be united. This will be our strength and with that, this league will grow. That's right ... in any case, Glenn, I do not have enough coupons for that reward badge. For the league, I'm personally willing to give you five badges of mine, what do you think? "

Berg's words were awe-inspiring. Most members in the rally were moved. Berg was a venerable elder in the league and he was willing to give up five of his badges to Glenn! It had been said that some people had been privately selling the badges for eight to nine thousand magic stones apiece.

The members then turned to gaze at Glenn. If Glenn remained "selfish" and showed no regard for the league, then he would be a very ungrateful person. After all, the league was giving him so much of its possible benefits, no less even compared to the elders,

not to mention Berg's personal favor.

But Alastair and Sam grimaced. Alastair knew Glenn was worth more than Berg had promised him. But he was not willing to admit that Glenn was even stronger than himself in front of the members of the league. He was a pivotal man in the league and he would not lower himself by doing that. As for the immortal Sam, the strongest student at the time of the freshmen trial, he of course didn't say anything to this "preferential treatment". He wouldn't argue for Glenn at all despite the fact that he had learned that Glenn had defeated Kyrie and that he had been regarding Glenn as his match in terms of sorcery.

At this time, Glenn was sitting behind Lafite, his eyes behind the mask focusing on the people around him. Their expectant expressions on their faces were telling him that if he refused to take the offer, then he would be a traitor or something like that.

Glenn hesitated, wavered in his choices. "Am I being selfish to not join them?"

Lafite leered, attracting all of the attention in the house. They watched her, someone who had not shown herself in the past few years. This pretty, sharp-tongued, and sometimes despicable woman.

"Contribute to the league? Don't you remember why this league was established?" Lafite scanned the crowd and sneered.

Berg stared at her, his anger seething. Seeing that she was not going to put in good words for Glenn to join, but was going to justify Glenn's hesitation, his anger broke.

"Lafite, they're scared by you. But I'm not. Say what you were gonna."

Lafite squinted. "As I said, why was this league formed in the ship?"

"It's established to help those helpless students in the ship, to

unite them for a better chance to survive in the Black Isotta." Alastair interjected in a firm voice.

Lafite eyed him and then turned to face the crowd. She then said fearlessly. "Thus, the league exists for the good of its members! It provided some benefits to Glenn in the beginning, like offering him the job in the library in return for some stones, selling him materials at a discount...but he paid his membership dues. He owes nothing to the league." She then continued. "Now the league is not able to assist in his personal development, then why can't he pursue his development on his own? Besides, he's not an elder, and he's never been treated like one so he doesn't have those duties you just asked."

Berg glared. "You..." Although he was in extreme anger. He was not able to retort.

Chapter 84: Badge Collecting

The final battle was on as the students from the two sides had expected.

The 12th section's strengths defenses-wise were obvious—the interjections laid criss-cross on the ground, the protective screen formed by the hills, the individual students' better skills, traps set up and the undercover students in the enemy's camp. And they could send the Protectors more.

But the war was not going with a landslide victory for the 12th section and unexpectedly...the 15th had gotten the upper hand, and the 12th was reduced to passive defense. The reason boiled down to the lesser students and near non-existent unity.

The 19th possessed the advantage of larger number of students and formed unified teams during operations both offensively and defensively, under the command of strong leadership, as compared to the 12th where separated and fragmented groups of students engaged in guerrilla wars. They would focus their heavy firepower on the charging enemies and even the strongest coalition on the 12th retreated when under attack and relied on the interjections for a passive defensive.

The sorceries casted and the resulting swirling elemental fluctuations were overwhelming, just like a raging storm.

At levels that had not reached the point where qualitative change had taken place, the students were "students" after all, and even the legendary ones, when surrounded by a large mass of enemies, would stand little chance of surviving.

Rustling sounds were heard...

Several students flew onto the sky and encountered swift turns of directions as magic lights shot up at them. Afterwards, a rumbling explosion occurred, and the shooting from the ground had ceased.

~~~~~

Glenn was alone standing in a dwarf mountain, and no one noticed his calm expression in this chaos. But as the circumstances of this battle grew more intense, Glenn couldn't help but become slightly surprised.

The 12th who excelled in small-scale conflicts was being suppressed in this war to a state of passive defense, relying on territoriality and traps among others. As long as a slight movement was detected, they would come under concentrated fire by the 19th, and those targeted would immediately turn into a tailed turtle, hiding in a wide range of overlapping interjections, committing to sporadic counter-attacks.

Glenn suddenly gained some insights regarding this.

Tower of Seven Rings had guided their students to be trained as two camps—the Bright sorcerers and the Dark ones, and its purpose was to adapt to small-scale conflicts and large ones for when wars would be waged against the foreign worlds.

In other words, the Bright ones would constitute the regular attack troops while the Dark ones would be the elite, squad who would perform certain special tasks.

Thus analyzed, if I finally manage to become a demon hunter of the Tower of Seventh Rings, I would be partitioned to either Bright or Dark then.

The Bright sorcerers would maximize the advantages of this training and would form a larger, more numerous and more capable, cooperative, super regular army. As for the Dark, they would play their combat capabilities to the extreme, and become Black Demon Hunters, which of course had nothing in common with the Black Sorcerers.

A whizz sound was heard...

Two 19th students who were in flight noticed Glenn standing

alone on a hillside, and the eyes of one of them turned fierce. That student suddenly crossed his hands and turned around, attempting to flee on his Whirlwind wings.

A student astray was either a dumb guy, or a top sorcerer student with almighty abilities, and this mentality explained the behavior of the fleeing student. If Glenn was stupid, then killing him easily was not worthwhile, but if he was strong, there was no need to fight with him at all.

Boom!

A fire shield suddenly appeared in front of this "dull" student, and the force produced instantly broke the Whirlwind of the fleeing student as Glenn's pair of calm eyes behind his mask stared at him.

"Sure enough, a strong one. Get back to our camp quickly!" Then the two students flew towards their camp, daring not to delay.

From the other side, Glenn watched.

That attacker's attack degree was about 90 degrees. Usually it would require 40 points of mental strength to stimulate 80 points of basic magic power, then he must pull off a 11-12 times of lever power to control the energy level.

Such students were aplenty in almost every school—they had little talent and wisdom, but had made solid steps along the way of drawing upon from their predecessors.

I'm gonna get him. Just for the badge. I have no role to play in this large-scale conflict. This plan may seem dangerous, but it is actually the safest way to go. "

Glenn suddenly held out one hand, and while calculating the complex formula of the forces of attraction and repulsion, the space around his body began to distort for a moment and then he reappeared in the air tens of meters away.

"Pull!"

Glenn shouted toward the sorcerer who was fleeing on his whirlwind. The next moment, a gust of gravitational force began to pull that student backwards, disabling his pair of wings and reducing his speed to a crawling turtle.

The student turned his head around, face aghast, and strained to see through Glenn's mask.

"Sanjay!" The other student screamed as she came back to the trapped student.

"Amy, get away. He is among the top ten of the 12th." He flapped his wings violently so as to not be pulled back to Glenn.

"No..." Amy clutched onto Sanjay's hands, trying to get him out of the swirl.

Glenn made another twist of space and came off a couple of meters away from the couple, and said coldly. "Why not you both stay?"

A spectacularly fast pillar of ice stroke towards the female's chest but was stopped by a green shield. However, before this female student had time to respond further, with a flash of the thunder force of the ice pillar, the shield had been broken like an egg falling on the ground, and then the ice pillar impaled the female's chest.

"No!"

Sanjay shouted in despair as he stared at the falling body.

Glenn was unmoved.

The distance between them was very close, so as Glenn pulled in his full strength, Sanjay's body was involuntarily drawn to Glenn.

Glenn's body constitution had become so strong that if he pinched his neck, then Sanjay would be dead.

A moment later, after Glenn had remembered Sanjay's physical information, he was about to do the killing. However, this male who was suffocating, with eyes full of anger, continued to slap at

Glenn with both hands despite the fact that the damage so weak to the point of tickling.

Being curious, Glenn slightly relaxed his arm.

"Cough, cough, cough!"

After three consecutive coughs, the male student shouted: "You bastard, you killed..."

Glenn shook his head disappointedly. "You were just trying to curse me? If cursing can kill others and protect yourself, then why do we have to go through those cruel trials in the 12th section? You are boring...If I was the one who had lost, would you curse yourself like that?"

Glenn snapped the male's neck, and threw him to the ground.

A shadow streaked to the ground. After a crashing sound, a mixture of flesh and blood appeared on the ground.

"Am I a bastard?" Glenn shook his head. Then his features began to change slowly with the help of his dissimulation sorcery and gradually his face became exactly like Sanjay's. "Such a child. It's war we are talking about. It is fair to kill."

War was indeed not something that Glenn could do anything about.

"What?" Glenn turned around and saw a translucent guy in the distance who seemed to have seen Glenn "turn". He was dumbfounded as Glenn discovered him as he was just about to attack Glenn, and this time fled at full speed.

"If you've seen it, then why not leave the badge!"

Glenn whisked his hand and a fire bat appeared on his fingertips. Then accelerated by the strong repulsive force, the fire sped into red blur.

Boom!

A heat wave scattered in the distance.

The next moment, the translucent figure had caught on fire and was falling as he screamed.

Glenn's forces of attraction and repulsion could not only expand the range of fire bat attack but also its speed. And this property would apply to most of his sorceries.

Taking off the Ashen mask, Glenn revealed Sanjay's appearance. He then picked up the badges from the three corpses, and also dealt with the problem of clothing.

"Glenn" would then go to the 19th and collect his badges.

# Chapter 85: The Heart of a “Black Sorcerer”

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Glenn had quietly left the main battlefield and was leaving for "his camp".

At this moment, after a burst of amazing magical fluctuations in the sky over the battlefield, the Protectors of the 12th had finally been sent! They were code-named Night Owl, Vampire Bat, Grim Crow, Carrion-Eating Vulture...

The 16 Protectors all had clear targets, and were going for the five core leaders in the 19th, leaving behind a trailing large stretch of space waves. That was three Protectors, equivalent of a level one Lianti sorcerer, for one leader.

In concert with these Protectors, the passive 12th students stepped out of their interjections and rushed to the 19th who began to show signs of their formation crumbling. It appeared to be a dramatic reversal of situation.

On the other side.

The remaining Protectors at the 19th were also dispatched——Wind Civet Cat, Red Swan, Moonlit Rabbit, Six-winged Crane, Greedy Dragon Pig, and Mud Goblin...

The decisive battle between the two parties reached a climax almost instantaneously with the advent of these Protectors!

Like a drop of hot oil landing into ice water, the calm situation suddenly turned turbulent. The Protectors along with the students dashed for these five leaders desperately. Fights between Protectors, between Protectors and students, and between students. A real chaotic bloodbath.

However, as the battle turned into a melee, the 12th was beginning to occupy an absolute superiority again...

~~~~~

Ignorant of the war going on, Glenn disguised as Sanjay, and flew to the 20 resource points of the 20 Drops of Blood at an unbelievable speed.

Half a day later.

"Where are you from? How come you came back from the battlefield?" A student at one resource point shouted at Glenn, his hand holding up a magic wand.

Since Glenn was camouflaged as Sanjay, he had done his homework and as he was just about to elaborate on a set of lies, a female who seemed to be familiar with Sanjay shouted in surprise: "Sanjay? Why did you come back alone? Where is Amy?"

The female student looked very cute. She had an appearance which was very similar to Bionna. Just so pure, cute, innocent! Her golden wave-like curly hair framed her white skin, a pair of bright big eyes akin to crystals, gleaming lips slightly tilted, and with a little baby fat on her face.

However, this girl was fundamentally different to Bionna.

This girl seemed to have no pretense, and gave a feeling of purity like the blossoming spring flowers in the sunshine, with the sweetest smile on her face that seemed capable of lowering the guard of anyone.

She ran down the resources point and came to Glenn's side.

The other students who were in charge of the fringe patrol saw Glenn was recognized, so they became relaxed and turned away, regarding him as one of their own.

Glenn's clothes had been deliberately ragged. He looked at this carefree, innocent girl, trying to control his feigned sadness, choking: "Amy is dead..."

Glenn did not say much to not to be given away by his accent.

Obviously, this simple and lovely little girl did not have the

slightest suspicion about him. She became sad, reflecting the emotion in her heart.

The girl's eyes turned red, shedding tears. She then choked. "Sanjay, Amy is not gonna die in vain, and we will win this war! Amy will be avenged! Those bloody cruel dark students of the 12th will get their punishment!"

Glenn nodded, wearing an appearance of exaggerated sadness, but he did not say another word.

"What? They are using fire spar and thunder rock to make interjections? That's a miraculous idea." Glenn watched as the students were laying down interjections.

Glenn was startled. The 19th wasn't as prepared as the 12th and they were not arming themselves with something like interjections. Yet these seemingly stupid students could use simple magical tools to create some. They used local materials and that was brilliant.

One had to say that in terms of the soundness of basic professional knowledge, the 12th was no match for the 19th.

Soon, the girl accompanied Glenn to a house solidified using the earth element. It was clean, tidy, and strong.

The house caused Glenn to be slightly ashamed. He and Lafite had known each other for years and yet he had never thought of improving their living environment.

Hula, Hula...

A male student hurried to Glenn's place with three others, and he eagerly asked: "I heard that you just came over from the battlefield, what happened there? Do we have the upper hand in defeating the 12th? "

Glenn shook his head "sadly", and a few drops of tears trickled down his face...

"Rosen, stop torturing Sanjay with the questions. He has lost his wife Amy. He must be very sad. Just let him take a good rest for a while." The little girl noticed Glenn's sadness on his face and became sadder, her big and bright eyes involuntarily shedding tears.

The students looked at each other with sighs of relief, and the head said: "Sanjay? Right? Well, have a rest here."

The students left, and Glenn sat alone on his bed, looking torn.

The little girl sighed. "Sanjay, you rest yourself up here and I'll see you again tonight." Then she gently closed the door and also left.

Inside the dim room, Glenn's eyes flashed. He muttered: "Their numbers are around 40-50. Complete defensive measures. Gonna be hard to breach from the outside with a few of us or even dozens of us, but if it's done from the inside..."

Glenn took a vial of poison from his waist——It was the Evil Eye Kasmira.

Glenn's body was immune to its lethal poison, so it was useless in building his constitution.

"At this dosage, it should be a problem to kill a hundred, but it's better to change some of these ingredients and then add some sedatives to make the poison last longer on them." While cooking the poison, he said: "This area is so outdated! Are they even using water collectively? One wouldn't expect such a thing to happen in the 12th! Such a rookie mistake."

...

Late at night, under the moonlight, Glenn visited room after room and collected the badges from the people who had been poisoned and thus had no ability to resist.

Glenn sighed as he found that cute, innocent little girl who had died in peace.

Glenn finally came to the headman's room and picked up his badge. He must have died struggling painfully.

He then pondered: "This one seems to be a little more well-known. So will he be easier to identify? Oh, Right, that little girl called him Rosen. "

Glenn murmured something, and then his features slowly changed into Rosen's. After the transfiguration was complete, he burned Rosen's body with his fireball.

Chapter 86: Feeding on Hatred

"Who are you?" A female student looked at Glenn coldly. And an additional 20 of them were closing in on him.

Glenn was baffled, having no idea what had given him away. He had spoken almost no words and the people here were not that familiar with Rosen. Then why was his identity revealed? However, he was now stopped by this green-eyed girl who announced that he was not the real one.

"More than 20 students on me and in their territory. It's kind of dangerous if a fight breaks out..." Instead, Glenn mumbled. "What are you talking about? I'm Rosen."

His words didn't work though. The fighters' suspicious eyes became filled with anger, hatred even, and one of them burst out saying. "You bastard, what did you do with Rosen?"

"You can't even recognize me? How dare you say you are not a fake? Your polymorph is interesting. You deceived me a little in the beginning. Way better than the guy before." The girl sneered.

Glenn knew the reason now. The girl before him must be someone prestigious in the 19th and he was not showing due respect to her, which had raised suspicion in the first place.

"It seems the Glenn Dissimilation Sorcery only works for the appearance." Glen thought.

Knowing a bloody confrontation would be inevitable, he was struck with an idea. He laughed in a fake cruel and evil voice. "Ha, What did I do to Rosen? Let me answer your question this way. I just ripped the clothes off the girl in front of him, exposed her body in the sun and..."

"Hate me, and hate me more..."

Of course Glenn didn't do something that despicable. But he was depicting the dirty scene vividly as if he had done it. Plus the

enchanted expression on his face which he deliberately put on. This really exasperated the students on scene whose eyes turned red, blood vessels showing and the tip of their nails digging into flesh.

The green-eyed girl, in particular, became gloomy and desperate on hearing Glenn's description.

Noticing the crowd was angered as he expected, his features turned more evil and intoxicated. "You green-eyed little girl seem delicious. I'll come to you after I've dealt with these guys. You'll be very pleased after I give you what that girl has been through."

Glenn was just acting out perfectly——His crooked tongue which is in sharp contrast with Rosen's righteous face, brought the men's degree of hatred to the apex.

The fight finally broke out.

"I want you villain dead right now." A male student in the group scowled. The next moment a block of bone armor appeared on his shoulder, and the armor then began to move across his body and soon covered it entirely. With the help of the earth element, he stomped on the ground and a hole was dug out in no time. The next second, he disappeared into it with a whizzing sound.

When he was seen again, he was already coming at Glenn from overhead with a giant hammer in his hand. He was putting in great effort to smash Glenn so as to relieve his anger.

The evil expressions were gone from Glenn's face. He then said lightly. "This hatred feels...just about right."

With a heavy intake of breath, Glenn threw a punch at the charger. A repulsive force surged toward the attacker.

With a droning sound, everything around seemed to be frozen. And the next second, the student in the sky stared as he was blown backwards even faster than when he was trying to strike. He then slammed into an earth-element solidified house. His bone armor

and shield broke, blood spurting from his mouth. He couldn't even rise up.

The remaining members of the team gulped upon seeing this as their pupils contracted.

Although Glenn was still assuming Rosen's appearance, they were looking at Glenn in great surprise.

Glenn pulled back his tingling hand, put his Ashen mask back on and sneered.

As the crowd was watching, Glenn roused the magical force inside his body as he casted a spell. A cloud of black fire then emerged from nowhere and gradually turned into a giant. It rose up and stared down upon the students.

Flame Giant howled. Its skin which was composed of water and radium elements bounced irregularly and the skin seemed to be moving, powered by the fire within its body.

Flame Giant roared again, blasting huge noise. He had become excited!

The three-meter high giant kept growing in size and grew five meters tall as an indescribable energy moved inside him. The pair of eyes which protruded from his eye sockets, like a snail's, turned more violent. The abruptly risen element energy even distorted the air in the vicinity.

Glenn felt the strong activity of energy and said excitedly: "Oh, this big? To kill a few students wouldn't be a problem at all..."

It had been verified up to date that Flame Giant indeed fed on souls and hatred!

Flame Giant could grow by feeding on souls, and evolve from drawing on life essence. It was like a sort of passive evolution.

But this evolution was restricted in some ways, in terms of frequency and time span. In other words, they would grow

forever.

As for eating hatred, it was a temporary ability enhancement method. Besides the strength they had, the more hatred, the more capable they were.

The sudden emergence of this giant had cowed the students, and with another blast of magical energy, a navy-blue, three-meter long sword, water element sword was seen in the leviathan's hand.

The giant thundered, and waved the sword around. The fire within was stirring up so violently as if it was trying to breach its skin.

Upon seeing this, Glenn was almost taken over by pride.

He was quite sure that he could stand his ground against even the Protectors or even take them down in an overwhelming manner.

"You..." The startled green-eyed girl recovered from the shock and murmured a spell after gritting her teeth. Soon two green elves came out from her eye sockets. They fluttered their wings quickly and landed on her shoulder.

Afterwards, the floral hoop around her head lighted and then petals were swirling around her.

And the other students were also in battle positions as if they were facing the threat of death.

The whole place was like a lighted tinder box——dozens of magical waves exploded. A storm was coming.

Glenn walked to the giant with his wand in hand and mumbled. "Since they are not fooled, then I'm afraid that we have to use force. One, two, three...twenty-six. Hmm, plus the one I collected, the quota will be more than filled then."

Glenn took out a magical stone for the provision of magical strength and then three fire bats appeared and hovered around his wand, wings flapping.

Explosions followed.

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Glenn was gasping, his face pale. There was a cut on his back but it was being "sewed up" by tentacles produced with the help of Glenn's dissimulation sorcery. The healing process was surprisingly fast. Besides that his Ashen mask had been hacked, a deep cut left on it. Another loss was his wand which had been cut in half; blood was dripping from it.

Glenn spat blood from his mouth and threw the wand aside.

The giant tramped back towards Glenn from a distance. It had shrunk greatly and its appearance now become irregular. Parts of his skin collapsed, and black flame became smoke and disappeared.

Glenn could tell, through his mental connection with the giant, that some of the students had escaped. "To handle thus many elite students in a stroke was kind of a stretch for me currently, especially with the two elves' special skills." He signed. "With these two elves, she could manage to be among the top four of the Black Isotta for sure. If not that great, she would at least match Ardas, Bright Sword's owner."

Glenn signed again as he counted the badges. "Two short...Forget it. Just buy them with my stones. The cover has been blown. I'd better get back to my place instead of being cornered again."

Glenn then transfigured to his original form, broke the giant (It can be re-summoned whenever it's needed) and left, leaving this scarred war zone behind.

The site was decorated by blood, explosion craters, as well as marks left by ice, thunder and earth element sorceries, and some things were still smoldering as if they would never cease to burn. It was as if a war just broken out here and at least over 100 students had been involved.

"Can't dawdle any longer. Must complete the Destructive Force



of Fire Blast Sorcery. If it's done, then..."

He recovered his mental force quickly using magical stones and soon he pulled off the repulsive force, got off the ground and swished off to the valley.

# Chapter 87: The Death of Gade

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In the sky, two students were facing off.

Glenn's nose and mouth were showing because the Ashen mask had been broken. He watched his rival's bull-like strong figure, and noticed a trace of thunder force moving around him.

"Thunder Axe Gade," said Glenn.

Gade wore a black metal armor, revealing only a pair of eyes which gave off red lights. The armor was covered with protruding barbs that was surrounded by elements of varied attributes. On his back was a one and a half meter long axe, which had scarlet energy swimming around it as if it was something alive.

"Ashen Mask Glenn. Did you expect us to meet again?" Gade grunted in a calm voice.

However, Glenn knew that this was the moment of peace before the storm.

Glenn had recovered from 80 percent of his wounds but his mask was damaged and his giant animal was still in a repair state in his mind, while Gade was fully combat ready.

They both had been engaged in a fight and Glenn was aware of his opponent's offensive power which could reach more than 150 degrees...

Glenn's face looked intense. "Fortunately, I still have that trump card—the Friendship Key." Glenn soothed himself by taking a deep breath: "It seems this battle is inevitable though."

Gade made a muffled sneer. "You refused to join the four major organizations. You're not ranked among the top ten. And yet you're on the wanted list, then it's natural you would be hunted by the four of us." Gade held out his hand quickly and in a flash his axe fell into his hand.

A huge noise boomed and then Gade's purple thunder force was raging about. It was moving so fast as if the nearby air was being pressured together and would explode at any time.

Knowing that battle was unavoidable, Glenn stretched out his hand and his End Sound dagger landed into his hand.

He watched Gade's axe which was even bigger than his own body as he produced the indistinguishable flame on the dagger. His face could be seen in the reflection on the dagger.

The two warriors stood off in the sky.

Judging from the face of it, Glenn was completely at a disadvantage—He was in a loose cloak, with no wand in his hand except for a weird-looking dagger while Gade was in a set of armor with an axe, not to mention his burly figure.

"Glenn, why were you in 20 Drops of Blood's territory before?" Gade seemed to be on the verge of initiating a charge. The thunder force around him seethed as if trying to drill into their owner's body. In the next second, a ball of thunder force formed in the air and became more solid by the second.

"Is this what it would look like if one could be at the second tier of the top ten?"

Having obtained an initial analysis on his opponent's strength, Glenn replied lightly. "It's none of your business where I have been. You won't stop hunting me until I can make it to top ten. So why are you..."

Thunder force descended from the sky before Glenn finished the sentence. Glenn came up to it with his dagger.

Sounds of metals clanking were heard.

Glenn was pushed backwards over ten meters. But he was relieved. "That assault only had 75-80 degrees of power."

On the other side, Gade, who had appeared to have obtained the

upper hand, assumed a surprisingly dreadful look in his eyes.

"How could it be?" He glared at Glenn. "If not for the fact that I took the initiative and had the reinforcement of thunder force and the axe, I would have been the one forced back...It's ridiculous."

Glenn sneered, showing a thoughtful expression. "My strength has grown to such an extent after ten years of hard practice?"

After having realized that, Glenn eyes turned cold and was about to counterattack. However, his body couldn't move as if he had been paralyzed. "The thunder force was a rare sign that could paralyze enemies?"

Gade recovered from the shock. He mocked Glenn after catch his expression. "What a pity to idle away your life while you have the potential to be among the top ten? You're so wasted...In this case, today you'll die here and be a waste forever. "

As Gade was launching an offensive, he found a cluster of fire burning on his chest. He immediately tried to put it out using his thunder force, but it grew more violent. He could feel the heat on his skin beneath the armor.

He produced more of his thunder force to suppress the fire, however, the fire burned more intensely as if the thunder force was oil.

Glenn was still clumsy in his moves. He laughed at Gade in his mind. "The Inextinguishable Flame would just die out naturally after a moment if it's not dealt with magical force. And his armor would kill it any time. A careful eye would have noticed this..."

The big ball of thunder force with the inextinguishable flame in it became huge. There were savage wilderness in Gade's eyes now.

"Glenn, let's see who will die today." Gade yelled.

The ball of thunder force exploded and in the next split second, he was in front of Glenn, the glare of his axe making the hair on Glenn's body prickle.

Glenn smiled in the next second. "Matters are much simpler when handling a bull that doesn't use its brain."

The gravitational and repulsive formula being calculated in his mind, Glenn was repulsed off by over ten meters from Gade.

A huge noise resounded. Gade caught up with his axe in hand.

Glenn seemed to be unworried. He distorted his body and was ten meters away.

Another loud sound resonated.

Gade caught up again. "You can't run out of my control."

Instead of continuing to run, Glenn took Gade on with his End Sound dagger.

Sounds of metal clashing echoed. Then Glenn whisked off again. He was paralyzed again yet was still laughing at Gade.

"The Inextinguishable Flame has been drawing on the 'nutrients' of the thunder force and the strong energy moves are about to explode. He is doomed." Glenn smiled. "He is killing himself. The sorrow of sorcerers not using their brain."

"You..." His eyes behind the helmet flashed with a tint of panic and confusion.

There was a method to rescue himself though. He could separate himself from the part of thunder force that had "caught" on flame.

Gade headed off into the sky with a booming sound without any hesitation, trying to complete the separation.

Glenn was dragged fast to Gade the second the latter jumped into the air. It was the use of the gravitational force! Glenn used his still numb hands to carefully control that force.

"Glenn, why are you..." Gade finally got afraid of the storming thunder force and the flame within.

Glenn's hands were swifter as the thunder force's paralysis effect

on him was becoming weaker and carefully controlled the distance between him and Gade.

"The wanted list...If the four major organizations' heads were killed one by one by me, would I still be on that list?"

"You'll fail!" Gade shouted back as he flew in full force, trying to get rid of Glenn.

Glenn's lips crooked. "When the time is right, I'll do it..."

With the flame giant as his assistant, Glenn would be able to hunt and kill the second tier students among the top ten now.

As he was talking, Glenn noticed the Inextinguishable Flame was about to reach the limits that Gade could bear.

"It's about time." Soon, a golden eye appeared on his forehead.

The escaping Gade suddenly felt his blood churning up, and then the thunder force ball before his chest exploded. Soon he had been consumed by the flame.

"No..."

A blinding light flashed and the next second a deafening sound came from the distance. A huge cloud of fire with a diameter of seven to eight meters was burning, and the heat waves stormed outwards.

Glenn pulled back his hand with the bat fire still burning. He then squinted. "There should be some badges on his body..."

# Chapter 88: Loss

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The decisive battle between the two sections had ended.

The remaining element waves danced around, and the outer rings of the mountain had been wrecked by the sorceries. However, the crash site of that Stigmata had been solidified to the extent that little damage had been made except for the countless battered bodies of students lying on it.

Most of the corpses belonged to the 19th section however.

Glenn who was in flight over the area frowned. The blood and flesh of seven to eight Protectors were merged and blended in the fragmented crater!

Besides that, corpses lay in big piles and limbs were everywhere with blood running like the water in a creek. Two medics were treating two wounded owls whose breaths were weak already.

Looking down on the scene, Glenn could definitely tell the fierceness of that battle.

Glenn could acquire over 200 badges (Gade had 170-180 badges) without putting in too much effort in the rear of the 19th section, while it was much harder to get even dozens here, and might be sucked into a war where personal endeavors might make little difference.

Teams from the 12th section swarmed towards the remaining 20 resource points of the 19th section. They had lost that decisive battle, so it was only a matter of time before these points would fall.

By then they would have no stronghold and would run about to escape from the 12th who would kill them mercilessly for the badges.

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In another crater, 70-80 19th section students looked up at the people standing on the edge of the crater, eyes terrified and hands tied, waiting to be "judged".

But the people and girls up there seemed to be divided into several camps and were arguing over some issue.

"Eh?" Glenn noticed some people he was acquainted with in the teams and the headman was Alastair. He flew directly to him with the hope of getting information about Lafite.

"We have to assign hands to watch them if we keep them alive. What if the 19th section made a comeback and we were pincer attacked? As a member of Death Sail League, I'd say kill them. No mercy on our enemies." Alastair's voice was determined. He couldn't summon up much pity after the cruelties he had been inflicted upon on that bloody ship and during the many years in Black Isotta.

Sympathy was now a luxury and a long-gone memory for many of the students.

A female student disagreed. "We Sand River League were responsible for catching these prisoners, so I say we let go of them since their badges have been taken. Otherwise we would be the same as those Black Sorcerers."

"Bullshit, how could you bring up the Black Sorcerers? Killing mutually was allowed in this Sorcerer World. It conforms to..." Another voice came from a camp, shouting out dirty words.

"Who says this is a war? You're still in the black about what this is really about..." Another one argued.

Glenn felt annoyed by the boring conversations as he walked to Alastair quietly.

Alastair turned back, shocked. "Glenn, you look..."

Glenn's appearance was awful. His symbolic Ashen mask was cracked besides his ragged clothes. Alastair swallowed what he was

going to say.

Glenn took a glance at the students in the crater who were either assuming wretched or angry expressions. He was not in the mood to care for such boring matter and so replied lightly. "Do you know where Lafite is? It's a mess here and the crystal ball doesn't work. She must have gone out of range."

Alastair slightly opened his mouth and mumbled a location.

Glenn frowned. "What's up? Did anything happen to her?"

"You'll know when you're there." Alastair forced a smile.

Glenn squinted and he soared into the air leaving behind clear footprints on the ground. The next second he started heading off to where Alastair had informed him to go by applying the sorcery of gravitational and repulsive forces. His fast speed drew great attention from the crowd below.

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Glenn recognized several familiar students on the ground in a quarter of time. They were members of the Death Sail league resting up. Glenn flew to them and landed by them steadily.

"Glenn..."

Glenn was greeted by Lafite. She looked very sad and appeared not in the mood to talk.

He grimaced subconsciously as he scanned around with his eyes. Lafite, Robinson, Robin...they looked fine but when his eyes rested on the crying girl who was facing Glenn with her back and that student lying on the ground, he saw why their emotions were torn.

He walked up to Nina silently and fixed his eyes on the man whose parts were pieced together. It was the man who had accompanied him from Bi Seer city, the man who he disliked at first and whom Glenn soon believed in to the extent of trusting him with his own life. Now his fragmented parts were only glued

together.

"Black sorcerers were not Bright sorcerers after all."

As the Black sorcerers continue with their practice of dark sorceries, their hearts grew crueler. They would trust no one and thus would rarely make close friends. Thus, they were lonely in this mind, and this was a transition they had to experience over a long period of savage killings.

Glenn understood that his grief was because of his loss of something important to him.

Robinson walked up to Glenn and said in a low voice. "It was a random killing by the Protectors. After he pulled off the Hematology sorcery, his thirst for blood made him lose his mind and went too far off from our side. We even didn't have the time to go to his rescue..."

Robinson seemed rather sad, even sadder than Glenn was, because he had been with Chris longer than he was with Glenn.

Glenn managed to hold back his sorrow. He was a man and he was not going to drop tears of weakness, yet his voice was choked. "Is it a side effect of the Hematology sorcery?"

Nina kept wailing at Chris' side, and she hadn't realized that her mask which covered half of her scar-ruined face had dropped off.

She was naturally aggrieved as she had lost her brother who she relied on since she was a little girl. He had protected her from dangers and sheltered her from wind and rain...Now that he was gone, she couldn't be that reliant girl any more. No one in this sorcerer world would treat her the way her brother did, even her husband.

True feelings from the depths of a sorcerer's heart was touching. It could melt away psychological barriers. The dead girl from the 20 Drops of Blood was of that kind.

Berg couldn't keep his feelings anymore and strode to Glenn. He

shouted at him as he clutched his clothes. "Where have you been all the time? You wanna do it solo? No, you're just hiding from something. You're scared. You're in fear! You have Alastair's level of power and yet you're a coward within! If you were with us, no one in your team would have died. She wouldn't be hurt so much."

Meddling with affairs as such seldom occurred between sorcerers, and the possibility of Black Sorcerers doing this would be "never".

However, it was Nina's pure feelings towards her brother which touched the strings of Berg's heart and urged him into speaking as such.

Berg's rudeness angered the grieving Glenn so much that his eyes behind the mask showed the intention to killing.

A strong repulsive force was applied and Berg was pushed back several steps after he was forced to relinquish his grip on his clothes.

Berg mumbled. "You..." Having realized his social faux pas, Berg didn't say anything more, and watched Glenn in terror. For a moment, he felt...

Glenn stared at Berg, and his murderous intent was gone.

A sudden influx of boring feelings struck Glenn as he looked at Berg's ignorant expression.

Some students were younger and some were shorter-sighted, so silliness was at its play every day. However, people were aware of the stupidity of particular things yet they would do it possibly because of that short-sightedness. It was as if they lived in a very limited area and were forced to do it.

Glenn seemed to have no intention of explaining to Berg, maybe because he was mature, and could look beyond. A man who was strong inside didn't give a shit to talk with someone whose mind was bent only on today.

Actions spoke louder than words.

Glenn went back to Nina and kneeled. He then burned Chris' body with the flame and handed 100 badges to her. "I know Chris is gone. He's your dear brother and he's also my friend. These badges don't mean that I'm offering you my help. I'm avenging my friend. Sorcerer students face death by the minute. People die and we'll die. Grow up Nina."

Nina looked up with her eyes still in tears. Her eyes had swollen and her body was shaking. She looked like a helpless lamb having lost its mother.

"Glenn. Woo..." Nina hugged Glenn tightly, venting her indescribable anguish and her tears soaked Glenn's ragged cloak.

With Chris gone, Nina was dead too, or was she reborn?

Glenn noticed the scar-destroyed half face of hers and Chris' promise of curing his sister's face came to Glenn's mind. It didn't come true after all. The world didn't continue or stop running because of someone's will, especially the weak ones.

Berg noticed Glen giving Nina 100 badges and he knew the acquirement of these could only be through killing students from the 19th section. How could he criticize Glenn as a coward and had been hiding? His face stung and body burned as if the students on the scene were judging his previous behaviors. He wished the earth would crack so that he could slip into it to escape from their irony-filled eyes.

It was like he was being slapped by the mockeries he threw at Glenn. Wasn't he akin to a clown playing in an old stage play?

He left, face red and head kept low——He wouldn't stay here any longer than the time taken to inhale, and this place was where he bore the mark of shame and finally learned to grow up.

# Chapter 89: Twenty-Eight Jurisdictions

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After half a year of chasing and hunting for the 19th section students, signs of fighting were everywhere across the Stigmata Valley. The objective to cull the 19th section was met.

As the war-supervising deans o the schools showed up and announced the victory by the 12th, all of the students in the valley would prepare to return to their respective schools and there they would continue cultivating for the tryout of the Holy Tower of Seven Rings. As a bonus, the 12th would be entitled to an allowance to exploit resources from the valley for the following century.

Lafite’s team were gloomy as Anna still looked lonely because of the loss of Chris. The hurt couldn’t be healed yet.

The journey back to their school was not smooth, both because of people’s greed to possess more of the badges and the settlement of the personal enmities forged during the fights. The fortunate thing was that Lafite and the others were with the Death Sail league, so nobody bothered to take them on.

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In the Bramble forest, a group of students were in a scuffle with a herd of giant apes. Anna felt all the more lonely as she watched from one side. She excelled at auxiliary sorceries however, as Chris was gone, she couldn’t make use of them at all. She couldn’t even fit into the world.

Without Chris, she was certain to have been unable to survive the ship that was bound for Black Isotta.

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The group of Death Sail league members were the first to come back to the Sorcery School of Black Isotta, and the many new faces were watching them with dark, watchful eyes. It seemed that life here in the school was not easy for the newly-enrolled students. It

might have been even harsher than the life Glenn lived before he went to war.

Robinson said to Robin in a low voice. "These little brats reminds me of the younger us, but I don't know if they are in bad or good luck."

Good luck would refer to the fact that they were here after the war that just ended and that would break out centennially. Bad luck of course pointed to the fact that they didn't have the chance to take part in the tryout of the Holy Tower.

Robin shook her head. "I guess it's good luck. They would be the first batch to prepare for the next tryout after ours, which would give them the upper hand. If I were among them, I would feel lucky. That way, I might be strong enough to be eligible for the test."

Lafite added in at that moment. "I wonder how the chosen three are doing."

"Exactly, the three of them were the very reason why the Fake Faceless Nilmar stole us away from the Lilith's and brought us here, because they're rumored to be eligible for the Holy Tower tryout? It's also said sorcerers who succeed in nurturing a Demon-Hunting student would be rewarded by the Holy Tower." Glenn thought to himself.

What Lafite was referring to was of course Sam, Kyrie and Bionna.

Robinson scorned. "Oh, Lafite. You know Bionna won't stand a chance given her level of strength. Kyrie and Sam were better, but it's still subject to luck to contest for the Demon-Hunting sorcerer's eligibility."

Lafite signed. "If Bionna was indeed not that good to win over a qualification as Robinson suggested, then why should she? Despite all of her efforts, she was not even a match to Bionna."

Suddenly, Lafite turned around and cast her eyes on Glenn. He had relapsed into his obscurity while keeping staying behind her. He spoke little other than thinking aloud the calculation of sorcery reactions like a robot every day before going to bed. People had almost forgotten his existence.

However, as Glenn’s girlfriend, she had a hunch that he had a shot.

She was not sure exactly how strong he was though. Except for a handful of badges he had collected, there were no rumors circulating that Glenn was one of those contributors to the wars nor that he was going to be a candidate to the top ten.

From the face of it, it appeared Glenn was indeed an ordinary student. One might wonder though. "Why did he round up so many badges, each of which equated to taking a life from the 19th?"

Glenn returned Lafite’s gaze, but his mind was still focused on the question of what sort of reward it would take to persuade a level two sorcerer to plunder a ship years ago.

Nina was silent in the group. She couldn’t help but sob as her hands touched the badges in her pockets. She then held in the tears that were forcing their way out. It had been over six months since Chris was gone; she had gotten better at controlling her feelings. She watched Glenn quietly with her gratitude and kept moving along with the group, her head downcast.

The timid little girl was growing up.

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Two days later on the 79th floor of the Black Tower.

"Oh, you appear to have matured much. That ten-year-long school war sure has taught you something." Garfield licked one of his paws as he saw Glenn come in, not showing too much of a surprised look and himself appearing senile.

It had been ten years since Glenn took part in that war and he was now a rather grown man at the age of a little more than 30.

Glenn handed over a bag of Marlin fish to Garfield, and he asked, with his nerves relaxed slightly. "Mr. Garfield, is our master here?"

Garfield took up the bag of Marlin fish and warned as he jumped onto the huge tank. "Don't you try to bother him. Him and his wife are making out inside. They haven't met in over a decade." Garfield continued. "I am so lonely and I'm used to loneliness. My only partner that can understand my heart are these fish. "

Glenn retched. "They don't understand your heart. It's your stomach that the fish are familiar with."

A day later.

Norris took a look at the badges laid in front of him and said cheerfully to Glenn who was sitting on Varro's side. "The secret mirror of the Black Tower will be open in a month and by then the badges will come in handy. You can take a walk in the tower owner's mirror for some time before you're tossed out. Enough about that, let's talk about the feelings you experienced these years."

"Feelings?" Varro and Glenn exchanged a glance.

Varro scratched his head. "There wasn't much...I was positioned in the rear of the resource points and didn't encounter many 19th section students during the war. It was boring. But I made a few friends and...I fell in love and fell out of it..."

Norris grimaced. The room became silent for a while. "Get out." Norris yelled.

Varro knew what his answer would get him somehow, because he was well aware of his mentor's temper and he went out as he stuck out his tongue once.

"Oh, feelings...There is one about Blast Sorcery. No...you meant the comparison between Bright and Black sorcerers, right?"

"You're much better than that that brat!" Norris nodded.

Glenn learned from Varro and rolled out his tongue too. He was a little kid before this old, old man. He then continued in a low voice. "The two sort of sorcerers have their respective strengths. They're accordingly divided by the Holy Tower of Seven Rings on purpose and serves a big purpose. The Black sorcerers would lose to Bright ones if the fight was on a large scale unless the Black ones could undergo quantitative change. If this recently ended war were bigger in size, I dare to speculate that it would have been the 12th that got routed."

Norris cast a glance at Glenn in satisfaction. "This is not only the case for the Holy Tower of Seven Rings. The other Holy Towers are the same, and you'll know the power of Bright sorcerers the minute you became a Demon-Hunter. They're the main force of the sorcerers. Although we're inclined toward developing Black ones, it's necessary to cultivate Bright ones as the main force for explorations." Glenn was illuminated, thoughtful.

Glenn knew that there were seven holy towers on the sorcerer continent, their names being the Holy Tower of One Ring, the Holy Tower of Two Rings, continuing up to the Holy Tower of Seven Rings. He also knew that there were holy towers in the underground world and on some major islands (they're land as for the locals) called the Sky Holy Tower and the Holy Tower of Black Wild. He had no way of knowing if there were others.

However, Glenn guessed that there would be at most two more holy towers in this sorcerer world, because anything related to holy towers had much to do with a Necromancer, a level seven sorcerer! Even with the profound cultures of the sorcerer world, there wouldn't be Necromancy in large numbers.

However, with only limited number of Necromancies, the sorcerer world was guaranteed to dominate over adjoining worlds and thus a civilization gave birth.

Truthfully, matters concerning the different holy towers were not what worried Glenn. What was urgent was the upcoming Seven Rings' tryout, and he couldn't help but ask his mentor about it.

"The tryout..."

There was a pause. "As far as the Holy Tower of Seven Rings is concerned, there are 28 jurisdictions and 226 sorcerer schools." Norris went on. "To better the recruitment for potential sorcerers, the 28 areas are divided into five camps. Camp 1-5, 11-15 belong to camp of Black sorcerers. Camp 6-10, 16-20 are Bright ones and the rest are the Mix camp. 200 students per camp will be selected for the tryout."

Glenn frowned. "The Mix camp!"

The Mix camp was a mix-up of both Bright and Black sorcerers where they were in constant wrestles and the regulations were harsher to better adapt to war conditions.

Norris continued lightly. "The students from the camp are generally the best and they represent the highest battle capacity of the Holy Tower. They could easily dominate over students from the rest of the camps. You don't have to be worried though. The rewards are reserved respectively for the best student from each camp. You don't have to compete with the Mix camp nor with the Bright camps to win the reward."

The good thing was that Glenn had the Friendship Key of the Black Tower and could summon it up three times.

In Norris' opinion, Glenn's talent would allow him a slim chance to win that top award. As he was ignorant of Glenn's current power, Norris held the belief that it was only "possible" for him to succeed.

Glenn didn't ask further after having obtained an initial understanding of the tryout.

As Norris suggested, Glenn had to make it among the best 200 from the contestants from camp 11-15 to be eligible for the tryout.

"Oh, there is one more thing to remind you of. The tryout is not a screening of students and the participants can quit and thus have their life spared when in grave danger. Not all of the students aspire to become a Demon-Hunting sorcerer after all. Some would opt for the road of becoming an Ougi sorcerer to become stronger."

Norris sighed as if recalling something. He then continued. "Get yourself prepared for the secret mirror first, and try to obtain something from it. After that, I'll start teaching you the Endless Eye Regeneration sorcery, the three methods to become a real sorcerer, and the trump card I prepared for the tryout."

Glenn nodded in excitement.

A long pause.

"Mentor, what would Ougi sorcerers' students would get from the Holy Tower anyway?"

There was silence again.

Norris smiled. "Are you worried? Don't be. I'm not in much demand of Sorcerer Essence. It's on a whim that I decided to cultivate you."

"Sorcerer Essence?"

Glenn memorized the word by heart.

"Perhaps it is some sort of currency to buy special resources from the Holy Tower."

Chapter 90: Intoxication of an Old Witch

Glenn arrived at Singh's room on the third floor of the Black Tower. Singh was the sorcerer who had sold Glenn his Ashen mask and the Bat Kiss which could summon up the wind element bat. He was also the one who taught Glenn rudimentary alchemy.

"Ha, Glenn. What brought you here?!" Singh stopped what he was doing and stared at Glenn in shock. He could remember Glenn as he once became more widely known because of Glenn.

Glenn grimaced for a moment as horrible memories rushed back to him, of when he was being investigated by the many sorcerers right after the first-year student trial.

But the man before him was a sorcerer, he didn't dare offend him in any sort of way.

He instead said respectfully. "Sorcerer Singh, I'm here to see if you can help me repair this mask. It got broken in a fight. Besides, I also wanted to know if there were stuff that can be used for the Holy Tower tryout occurring in three years. Ordinary magical tools would be of no use for students like me."

The Ashen mask was one of the top class magical tools and it could boost the effects of some sorceries even in the tryout. Glenn desired to own one or two more pieces of such magical tools. Most of Glenn's time was going to be devoted to his research on the Destructive Force of Fire Blast Sorcery and the fastest method of strength enhancement that Glenn could think of would be resorting to magical tools.

Singh took over the broken mask from Glenn's hand. He discovered a cut that almost destroyed the mask and he then scowled. "Key parts of it are damaged. I'll have to check the stockpile to see if there is the appropriate material to get it repaired. You come back for it in 15 days. On the second matter, I don't have any first rate magical tools you mentioned. But I know

an old guy who has brilliant tools on sale."

Catching Singh sneering, Glenn knit his brow. "Who is it?"

"The gal has foresight. She'd stock the tryout tools and sell them when the tryout is around the corner. Thus, buying the stuff you need immediately might cost you lots of extra magical stones. But I believe the whopping high price wouldn't be a problem for you."

After having said that, sorcerer Singh gave Glenn an address and the name of the seller.

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On the fourth floor of the Black Tower lied a sumptuously-decorated room.

Glenn was almost taken back at the sight of the dazzling objects in the room.

"The Flame Fusion Bead? Sold in pairs at 30,000 magical stones? The pact to summon up life from foreign lands? The body-odor-concealing medicine? The flare stone? The enclose scroll? The top notch life leaf? The enchanting and lethal poison? The one-off space pocket? The interjection material? The high-grade and even highest-grade magical tools..."

The list was long and yet what surprised Glenn most was a glaring blue key lying in a corner of the room—the Stigmata Friendship key.

"Hey, little boy. Are you interested in the Stigmata Friendship key? It's a top-notch tool that can be used in the tryout. It's even more useful than the Flame Fusion Bead! Although it's one-off, it can summon up extremely powerful magical tools that real sorcerers use. It costs only one super magical stones!" The old witch encouraged Glenn, showing her blackened teeth.

Every student who ever set foot in this room were invariably rich in magical stones and it was for that exact reason they were introduced to this shop.

Also, Glenn made another discovery——this old witch was that level-two sorcerer who had taken away Kyrie and Bionna the minute Glenn and the other students landed on the sorcerer continent.

Glenn coveted the blazing objects in the room while his hate for the old witch grew. "Only one super magical stone?" Glenn repeated what she just said in his mind. "That's 100 high-grade magical stones or one million low-grade stones!!! That's an astronomical number for ordinary students who usually possess only one high-grade magical stone. What is worse, the articles are highly overpriced compared to the market. She is such an avaricious witch."

While abusing her in his mind, Glenn couldn't resist his hankering for the invaluable merchandize. He became determined as he grit his teeth and pointed to the one-off Space Pocket. "I'll have three of that."

The old witch giggled and fished out three one-off Space Pocket in the blink of an eye.

Despite the fact that it could only be used for one time, it was still a top-level ware.

"I also wanna get that constitution-building medicine, and that slice of first rate life leaf." Glenn inclined his body and pointed at a vial of medicine and a purple-and-green leaf.

Another giggle was heard.

Glenn's face was somewhat distorted after the spending binge. The old witch made a satisfied grunt the second she caught Glenn's heartache and pain at the lavish spending. It seemed that her happiness originated from the torn expressions shown on the students' faces when they bought these "luxuries".

Glenn's eyes moved to the psychedelic and lethal poisons but didn't dwell because poisons at such toxicity would not affect

anymore. Instead, he fixed his eyes on a small iron box. "Wow, is this Vanishing Slit selling at 50,000 low-grade magical stones? Can you lower the price a little bit?"

"Sorry, no bargaining in this shop."

The high-pitched squeak increased as Glenn became more torn at the prices. It was as if she had gained pleasure from something extremely agreeable. She almost drowned herself in the sensation, so great was her joy, and couldn't help herself with it. Her body was even quivering a little bit.

"Get me that Vanishing Slit." Glenn put his foot down. He decided to give up on some unnecessary wares after calculating his remaining magical stones, and finally paid his attention to the biggest goal of this visit—the magical tools.

Several dozens of high-grade magical tools of varied sorts with their respective functions were displayed on the closet for luxuries. There were seven or eight finest grade tools of its kind among them, but the prices...

Glenn's eyelids jittered.

He then narrowed down his choices to two magical tools and was making his final choice between them. One was a large sword and the other was a magical wand.

The Glowing Wand: increase fire element attacks by 5% for attacks under 300 degrees ; increase basic attack degrees by 30 points; be able to enclose the Kiss of Flame Tongue at 125 degrees.

The Nine-Headed Snake sword: can be activated when attacking using most of the basic elements, basic durability is 500 degrees (It will be destroyed when exceeding 500 degrees)

Glenn stared at the Glowing Wand for a long time and sighed. "It only works when the attack is less than 300 degrees? If I succeed in pulling off the blast sorcery, then..." His eyes moved to the Nine-Headed Snake sword and finally said: "I'll have that!"

The sword was 1.4 meters in length and 20 cm in width. The size fitted to the figure of ordinary humans.

Thinking about his remaining magical stones, Glenn made up his mind and aimed his finger at a metal armor too. "I'll have that Moisture armor, too."

Moisture armor: Deflect attacks of the water, radium or life elements under 100 degrees ; Increase speed of magical strength restoration; Absorbs water element and maintains skin luster and moisture. The skin improvement attribute was quite a feminine aspect which Glenn ignored.

An hour later, Glenn came back with a pouch of magical stones and bought the stuff he ordered. His inventory of stones ran low.

After that, Glenn locked himself in the dormitory for a long time. He focused all of his time on the research of blast sorcery and found time to observe the radium veins in the two twigs.

Glenn took back his Ashen mask 15 days later and proceeded with hard work. Like a laborer catching the production deadline, he worked like crazy on the many element reaction formulas and ran tests to verify them using the basic magical matrix on his soul.

Basic magical matrix varied individually like one's unique fingerprints. Hence, theories guiding a certain kind of sorcery might turn out to be the same but the process of exploring them was vastly different.

Another 15 days passed.

Glenn stood before a mirror. He took off his gray-colored cloak and revealed his muscles, brawny as metals. Every angular muscle contained unimaginable power. This was what it would be to have a 108 degree of body constitution!

He would not become narcissistic though. He then put on the Moisture armor carefully. The metal silver luster shone. The mysterious aura was gone and instead he gave off an image of



rough, raw wildness as if he was a vigorous leopard. The Nine-Headed Snake sword suddenly appeared on his back with a rushing sound. The seal cuttings on the sheath made Glenn look more strong and overbearing.

Glenn put on the repaired Ashen mask, and his eyes behind the mask appeared calm and rational. His long, blond hair rustled, which helped recover his mysterious aura.

"It's time. The Black Tower mirror is going to open up." Glenn strode out of the room.

# Chapter 91: Black Mirror (I)

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Under the watch of sorcerer Norris, the students who had paid the 100 badges they had collected walked onto the huge scale laid on the square of the Black Isotta. Currently there were about 90 students perching on one end of the scale, including Sam who was now ranked 9th of the school's top ten, as well as Alastair, Belle and Kyrie. However, Lafite and Bionna was not in sight.

The reasons why Lafite and Bionna were not allowed to enter the Black Mirror was that they both were wounded during the war, and Lafite hadn't been informed of the inside information that badges were necessary for entry into the Black Mirror until the war had been underway for quite a long time.

The top ten students all didn't fail to show up on the mirror except for the three who had fallen during the war. They intended to gain something from the upcoming travel. After the purgatory of war, there was a rearrangement and two of the open positions had been taken by two students who had accumulated more combat achievements than the others, and one of them was Sam. There was one spot left unfilled because news of Gade being killed by Glenn wasn't released.

"Glenn."

Sam's voice sounded toward Glenn. His tone was calm, revealing no surprise at Glenn's new outfit.

"Eh?" Glenn turned back and stared at Sam with a confused look. His mind had been busy trying to figure out the Blast Flame sorcery calculations.

Sam appeared to be humane only when he was talking to a member of the Death Sail league, and at other times he was just impassive.

No one knew why.

However, Glenn could feel for Sam every time he saw him. The freezing cold and loneliness deep inside. He felt that inside this powerful man was a little boy crouching in a street corner in the cold winter.

Glenn shook his head, trying to shake the feelings off his mind.

Perhaps the little boy who was curled on the street and watched the passersby was...was himself. The only vague memory he had? Who were his parents? Why was he in Bi Seer city? Was he a mysterious freak who came to this world from nowhere?

He wouldn't fantasize and think that he was of high birth as was typical in novels though. He was, in all likelihood, an abandoned son by a poor family. Every one of us might have wished to be a descendant of a sorcerer in a fantasy as Glenn did when he was with Old Ham. However, did birth matter that much?

Sam walked up to Glenn and stood alongside him. "You look just ordinary every time I see you. But it seems I'm not able to ignore you at all. You look like a monster in sleep. I feel confused about you and also excited."

"A monster in sleep?" Glenn replied slowly. "I might seem to be a monster to friends. To talents like you, I believe I'm more like a growing beast."

Sam was about to say something more, but the scale on their feet shook and Glenn had arrived at a new, unknown place as the scale quivered to a blur and his body was stretched to strands of noodles.

"En? Am I in the Black Mirror already?" No sickness assaulted Glenn. This was how better constitution benefited him.

Glenn looked up around the gray sky and the power contained in the nearby elements rioting. It was as if the forces of nature had gone wild and become unbridled by natural laws. Change of seasons, of weather, and the alternation of day and night were gone.

"I had this feeling at the first-year trial mirror dropping site, but it's not exactly the same. Would it be like this if the world was broken? Loss of the regulating rules? The world just running wild?" Glenn guessed.

Sorcerer Norris once said that a neighboring world of the sorcerer world was completely shattered when a war broke out between the sorcerer civilization and a foreign civilization in ancient times. Since then the shattered fragments of the destroyed world continued to survive by drawing close to the sorcerer world.

When the second war broke out between the civilizations, the self-sacrificing Necromancer saved the sorcerer world by prying the world up to this vast, boundless place using his lever. Therefore, it was possible that the dependent world pieces were also moved here?

Wisdom glimmered in Glenn's eyes. He moved his foot with a start, and looked down at the, moist, wriggling soil under his foot.

"Eh? Isn't this creature the..."

It was a black, streamlined, earthworm-like creature, with a sucker that belonged to flies. It was digging out soils with its thickly-covered black antenna, reeking of a stench.

"Isn't this the iron wire worm? It's a worm that is extinct in the sorcerer world." Glenn was surprised. According to book records, it had a "misfortune string" within its body and could thus be used to pull off curse sorcery by some sorcerers. Besides, some of its behaviors were well-worth studying too.

Without any hesitation Glenn threw his hand at it and clutched its head. He then spent about half an hour in pulling it out of the ground.

Glenn became more shocked when the plucking process was complete.

"Why is it so long? Was there any self-evolution or mutation? "

It was reasonable Glenn became astonished. The Iron Wire worm was 20 meters long and its body was of a human baby arm's length in radius. It was supposed to be 3-5 meters long according to records.

Shocked as Glenn was, he would not be merciful to it. Soon he had killed it and tried to sample it. He stuffed the worm into the newly-bought one-off space pocket inch by inch headfirst. The pocket seemed to be bottomless, and the worm was soon pushed in altogether. One thing worth mentioning was that after stashing the worm, or stashing anything else in the pocket, the pocket would be destroyed when its contents were taken out.

Glenn was cheered up at this achievement when the journey had just started.

At the time, high-rising trees in the distance caught his attention. The trees appeared to have undergone some mysterious changes in this rule-free shattered fragment of a world. The whole forest gave off a dark and hideous image set against the gloomy sky.

After having put some thought, Glenn finally flew to this seemingly endless forest.

This must be a fragment of a world where the living beings, weak and strong, had been enslaved by the owner of the Black Tower for a long period of time. Thus, there was nothing to be worried about. If he was in danger, the tower master would just throw the threatening creature(s) out of the world fragment.

However, there was a possibility of being killed by the creatures here. Then it was his or her bad luck. Every exploration came with risks. The tower master was not a nanny trying to look after the "intruders".

A five-meter-tall shadow appeared just as Glenn left the place where he was at.

The shadow was a two-headed dog.

"Strange, there was definitely changes of force and space here. Why can't I sniff out any scents?" one of the heads mumbled.

"See the footsteps? The target is sly by having concealed body scent. Call out to the night owl for cooperation and we'll get some good rest after getting the job done."

Cuckoo, cuckoo...

A night owl flew towards the dog from the distance in no time, followed by two snakes whose flight was supported by a pair of white wings.

The tower master's slaves observed for some time and headed off to the forest as well.

## Chapter 92: Black Mirror (II)

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The forest was composed of thorny bushes whose leaves were covered with black-red mottles.

However, upon closer observation it would be discovered that the spots were actually small insects, thus forming that massively extended insect-infested area that caused arrivers to feel terrified.

Glenn took out a test tube and carefully collected a number of "mottle insects". They were only one-tenth of a human fingernail in size. Strangely enough, in addition to an oral cavity in the frontal part of their body and a black gland that secreted venom, their legs seemed to have shrunk and degraded into a sucker.

"Well, I've never seen this kind of creature before. Maybe I could explore them and see if its toxicity can be used in the toxin constitution-building practices later on." Glenn dropped the test tube into his space pocket as he was thinking about this.

As Glenn was about to turn around and leave, he made a sudden exertion and rushed to one side about five meters away, to avoid a tree that was coming at him at high speed. Its branches had the leaves that had contracted the same mottle sickness.

Glenn was surprised and he said: "Oh, a symbiotic relationship has been formed! No wonder the insects' legs have degenerated into almost nothing."

With a swish of his Nine-Headed Snake Sword, a branch was hacked off and green blood squirted out.

After the exertion of the thunder force, the worms on the branch's leaves were all shaken off. He then put the struggling twig into his space pocket.

Having taken a look around, he then flew off toward a certain direction.

The flight went on for several kilometers and he gathered a few

of the creatures exclusive to this land. He stopped at a tree that dwarfed the other trees.

The tree was up to 300-400 meters high, and it still distinguished itself in size in this forest where tall trees were common to be found.

It was rumored that the highest tree existed in the wonder world. The so-called "world tree" was the guardian of that world and it supported the heaven there so that the sky would not fall. Life propagated and thrived with the tree as the hub. In Glenn's understanding, its importance compared to the Holy Tower of Seven Rings for the nearby schools.

There were also beliefs that many legendary life trees were well-known for their height, and an example were the life trees in the sorcerer world, which could be as high as several thousand or even tens of thousands of meters high. The tall trees always overwhelmed the smaller ones nearby as a tree had to prevail over the others to grow to that height. This was determined by the law of the jungle.

Despite all that, the tree in front of Glenn...

Glenn gathered himself and walked around the tree which was 4-5 meters long in diameter. Soon he found a cavity in the tree above one bulky root. The cave could only allow one man to dive in as far as its width was concerned.

He didn't act rashly and rush inside. Instead he produced the Inextinguishable Flame and looked inside. In the huge space within, Glenn saw many pairs of green, round eyes.

Squeaking sounds were heard.

Rats the size of butterflies swarmed outside. They seemed to be fearful of lights and parted into two ways around the flame. Glenn waved the flame on his hand and saw an empty cave.

Looking into the cave, Glenn found many dark-colored stones



floating in the trunk. It seemed like the cobblestone-like rocks were levitating in midair by using their repulsive force against nearby objects. Strangely enough, Glenn couldn't even feel the power of their leylines even by using his own repulsive and attractive forces!

"Wait a minute. Isn't this the Tjugealong stone?" Glenn became shocked.

The Tjugealong stone was transliterated from a word existing in the language of a foreign world. They were used by black sorcerers to help the sewed-up creatures, cursing beasts and mutation beasts to overgrow themselves. They were poisonous to live beings of nature but they differed from the toxins that could be used for constitution-building. It belonged to the field of Occult.

What was inconceivable was that the lives here had adapted to this evil material's toxicity and had grown huge in stature.

Although these materials might not be useful for Glenn's current research, they might prove to be so in his future experiments. Therefore, he gathered all of the stones in the trunk and threw them into his space pocket arbitrarily.

"Wait a second, look at the rats' feces, they're giving off special life waves. I can use them to cultivate certain plants, like the explosive mushrooms..." Glenn grabbed the dung with his bare hand without caring for the filth, and also put them into the pocket.

Time was precious because Glenn might get thrown out of this fragment any time. He didn't tarry after having collected the stones.

With that in mind he shot off a repulsive force against the ground at his feet and he then took to the air, and flew toward the canopy of the huge tree.

"Eh...is this the Shade butterfly." Glenn uttered a strange noise.

Above his head were thousands of Shade butterflies fluttering their wings in pairs.

Shade butterflies were recorded in the Canine Olfactory Enhancement and Odor Mapping. According to it, they could live by feeding on the odors they collected. But they had gone extinct in the sorcerer world. It would be out of the question for Glenn to forget such a wondrous creature.

Several of the butterflies were pulled into Glenn's hands after he had put forth his gravitational force. He then sampled them before throwing them into his space pocket.

Afterwards, Glenn looked up at the golden fruits hanging in the canopy, and an enormous bird nest.

Glenn gulped and sneaked toward the crown of the tree. Snoring was heard as he approached closer. The nest was 30 meters in diameter and it would be no wonder if its inhabitant turned out to be an avian monster or something of that sort. And Glenn would not bother for the provocation.

70 or 80 golden fruits hung in the tree top, glittering in the sun. Glenn took a deep breath and picked one. As he was getting a second one, the sound of babies crying filled the air nearby.

"Lylia's been taken. Woo..."

"A robber invading... Lylia is gone. Get some help..."

Glenn stared at the golden fruits, displaying a stunned expression.

Features began to show on their faces and odder even, they were crying and communicating in the language of the sorcerer world like babies at the age around three, tears in their eyes, showing fear.

Aye...

A surge of terrifying aura overtook Glenn. A huge, one-eyed head

with a red cockscomb was glaring at him.

Glenn's skin crawled. The atmosphere turned heavier.

He made a sudden movement and had moved away 100 meters without sparing time for thought. He made a consecutive sudden movement and finally disappeared from the monster's sight.

The huge bird showed no intention of capturing Glenn itself. Instead, the bird made a long chirp.

Seconds later, animals of all sorts—Dark Night Owls, three-eyed monkeys, two-headed dogs, six-winged cicadas— were summoned and they headed to where Glenn had escaped.

This bird must be a high grade soul slave belonging to one of the owner/master of the Black Tower.

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Glenn continued fleeing until that giant tree disappeared from his sight. He landed with a start and rested putting his hand on the tree.

"It was terrifying!" Glenn gulped. "That must be a level-three sorcerer creature at least. I'd be so dead if this wasn't in the Black Tower mirror but a total strange place."

Glenn recovered a little and noticed a rock coming out of the ground. He came to it with surprised look on his face. Finally, he touched it.

"Feels like metal and crystal...Must be a product of some sorcerer, or is it a relic from ancient times?" Glenn hesitated. "That couldn't be possible. Quite Spring said ancient relics were guarded by soul slaves. But this place is but empty grounds, a clearing of the forest. Nothing special."

Chapter 93: Black Mirror (III)

Glenn gave a shout as he hacked at the crystal and metal rock with his Nine-headed Snake Sword.

The loud sound of the sword against the rock rung in his ears while the rock bore no mark of damage at all. God knows what it was made of and with what sort of processes. It bounced off Glenn's attack when it had been eroded already.

Nonetheless, the echoes foretold something—the space beneath the rock was hollow and sounded huge. Big surprise.

Glenn walked around it and found a crack on a corner of the rock. It looked like a natural mark caused by geological changes over time. He cleaned the surface of the crack with water which he produced by pulling off some sorcery and an entrance to a cave appeared.

He did not rush into the cave. Instead he sniffed by using his enhanced sense of smell. The smell of earth gushed out, combined with something giving off a repulsive rot. It carried the smell of ancient properties in an enclosed space.

Glenn sent an ultrasonic wave down into the cave, and a spacious room appeared with black and white background colors. On the ceiling hung sundries of sorcerer-design chandeliers, mostly seeming to only function as adornments. In this environment where element density was much thicker stood a huge article...

"This must be a relic from ancient times then. Something not found even by the master of the Black Tower?"

Looking at the small-sized cavity, Glenn said to himself. "Looks like I have to get a little slimmer."

Under the Glenn Dissimilation, his body started to twist, and soon he became thinner and snuck into the cave.

The Inextinguishable Flame lit, Glenn floated further into the

cave by using his attraction/repulsion sorcery, and after some time he landed steadily on the ground.

The ground clanked as his feet touched the "soil". The clanking sound echoed in the room as dust was whisked off.

"Is a buried history being unveiled?"

Glenn activated his mask to block the dust and further explored this huge unknown space.

It was a huge hole with no end in sight. Countless chandeliers hung overhead were of less use than the few lights shot through from the crack and the fire ball in Glenn's hand.

As Glenn moved the fire ball around, he found some crystal, cylinders erect in the air, capped with metal wares. The tubes stretched into the darkness deep down.

"Are they the equipment for making some classy creature by sorcerers from ancient times?"

The tubes were over 10 meters long for the shortest and 50 for the longest, permitted by Glenn's vision, snaking deep down from the very top of the cave. And signs were discovered on them, but they were too blurry to be recognized.

"The signs might be used for the enclose sorcery."

The biggest crystal ware down there attracted Glenn's attention. He thrust at it immediately without caring for the consequences, his boots whisking off dust as they clunk against the ground.

Glenn washed it quickly with sorcery-generated water. Heavy layers of dust were rinsed and a clearer view was revealed before him—a huge skeleton within the tube!

It was a long, irregular skeleton. Quite like a gibbon, but with hooves and its head was an octopus' with endoskeletons. There were many strange little bones, which Glenn had no idea supported which organs. The translucent skeleton became thinner

as it was squeezed inside a ware. It was actually floating as if weightless, pliable and flexible.

Barely legible pictographs in red were found in the bottom of the tube.

Glenn tried his best. "A Heteromorphic, infancy, subject 0004. Danger level: highest."

Glenn was taken aback. He murmured in shock. "This place is indeed a laboratory where ancient sorcerers run experiments. Subject 0004? An infant? A 50 meter long ware to wrap an infant? What kind creature is it? The highest lever danger when it's just a baby???"

As he was throwing the questions, he noticed a pool of milky liquid in the tube. And it was pulling his soul.

"This extensibility, inclusiveness...Is it the heteromorphic marrow?!" Glenn couldn't believe what he saw.

There was a legendary material that had become extinct in smeltery. It was called the heteromorphic marrow, found by the sorcerers of ancient times. Because of its extensibility, and inclusiveness, it was ranked as the best raw material for making armors.

"Heteromorphic marrow in such little amount can only be enough to make a shoulder pad."

As a student, he had of course never had the chance of witnessing one. His eyes were popping out with curiosity. He immediately looked for the switch or something to open this tube and get the marrow.

With it to his facility, he could make a first class magical tool for sure. It was its extensibility, inclusiveness that eventually mattered.

There was one minor setback both at present and in the long term. Glenn sucked at smeltery.

"Never mind..."

Glenn flew to the top end of the tube and started attacking the cap with the water and fire element alternatively.

Using fire for a moment and water for another; this accelerated the erosion of the cap.

Glenn so desired the marrow as if he was an octopus wanting fish as food.

Cool and heat.

The internal structures of the cap were being shaken and started to disintegrate because of the thermal expansion and then contraction. The molecules were being reduced to its smallest state. But this was the theory. The actual change depended on the article's physical condition and the difference in temperature.

"It won't take long before this rusty metal breaks..."

With a start Glenn dove into the tube. He collected the white liquids carefully and put it in the space pocket. As he was leaving, the translucent, flexible skeleton caught his attention.

He then slashed his Nine-headed Snake sword at it.

"No way..." Glenn gulped. "It's as solid as this..."

Glenn had directed his sword at the thinnest part of the skeleton. Thus, such a huge thing would not fit into the space pocket at all. The space pocket was not a real pocket and Glenn was not able to enclose stuff.

At the time Glenn sensed a movement at the crack. He sniffed the familiar smell of owls.

"It's not good. School's protector is here!" Glenn got out of the tube in no time and dove down into the darkness.

"Better to stay in here a little longer. The discoveries are nowhere to be found elsewhere."

Glenn continued his flight downwards in the light of the small fire ball he produced. Tubes containing Heteromorphics flew past.

Suddenly a metal gate appeared in front of Glenn. It appeared to have been attacked by a formidable force. The center of the metal gate was stressed out and the stamp was in the shape of a hoof, the diameter of which was 10 meters. The originally smooth front of the gate protruded some 7 or 8 meters in the center like a creased paper!

"Ah..." Glenn grimaced. He had hacked a tube with his sword just now and it didn't appear to have made even a dent.

The corner of Glenn's eye twitched as he took another path.

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Dark Night owls cooed, followed by some other unknown hoarse tweetings.

Glenn scowled. He put out the flame and tried to make no noise while flying.

However, it seemed that the soul slaves of the Black Tower master had their way of discovering/locating their targets. The owls hovered for some time and came toward Glenn directly at full speed.

"I'm doomed." Glenn's face darkened.

Glen descended to the ground and a metal ball lying on the floor caught his attention.

"What's this? Have I seen it somewhere? Oh, isn't this the bead Heart of Mechanics (Victor) was studying at the mirror drop place back in the first-year student trial?"

Glenn knew nothing about mechanics but he speculated that this ball might be some leverage for a trade or something. He put the bead into his pocket as he surveyed the surrounding.

At the time, Glenn also discovered that the wall beside him was



made up of crystals rather than metals. But this fact would serve no good for Glenn's escape because he couldn't break that as well.

Glenn could tell the guardians were coming closer and he had discarded his attempt at escaping. Instead out of curiosity, he wiped off the dust coating the surface of a tube beside him.

Glenn almost stood dead still! His breath was literally taken.

It was an extremely large space inside the tube, so expansive that the place Glenn was in became a wing-room to it. A 300 meter long creature was floating inside, giving off light, green lights.

It seemed like a fascinating and hallucinogenic wonderland.

Upon closer observation, something more was found. Around the huge skeleton was thousands of smaller, translucent skeletons like ants defending the queen ant.

A beautiful view became scarily arcane.

After some moments, Glenn's eyes were set on the countless human skeletons and mechanic wreckage on the ground, lined up and forming up a carpet.

Terror stuck Glenn. He could almost hear the loud shouts as the many ancient sorcerers fought each other.

"What happened? Where is this place? Somebody tell me please."

"Gota ya."

An owl landed on Glenn's shoulder.

Glenn couldn't resist at all as the surrounding repulsive forces assaulted him. His body was stretched thin and the next second he had disappeared.

# Chapter 94: The Arminio Parasite

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Everything before Glenn's eyes turned dark for a moment and the next second he had arrived at a completely new place.

The place was lit brightly by warm, sorcery lights. Elements in the air flew in order. The clean floor was made of blocks of slates with innumerable signs hovering off them. It formed a circle matrix with six stars in it and Glenn was standing on the very center of the matrix.

"Where am I?" Glenn wondered.

"You're good to hang in there for over two hours. What did you get out there?" A familiar voice came up.

Glenn turned back and traced the voice. It was his master sorcerer Norris. And amazingly enough, he found himself standing on the 30-meter-long-in-diameter, circular disk of a high tower.

"Master, where is this place?" Glenn looked down.

"The 99th floor of the Black Tower." Norris smiled. "The mirror is quite different from the sorcerer world, isn't it? I've been there a couple of times, and that place's never failed me."

The 99th floor of the Black Tower. That's it!

Glenn became a little relieved and answered. "Yeah, the difference is big. It seems to have no natural laws governing the creatures in it. It's quiet. But the laws of the sorcerer world seems to have exerted influence on that shattered fragment of world."

Glenn landed where Norris was standing and continued with what he had seen in the mirror.

A moment later, Norris responded. "Heteromorphics are commonly seen there. The natural laws are different as you said. You might get something more by communicating with Varo. For the Tjugealong stone, it will be of more use when you become a

Holy Tower demon-hunter than it will be for Ougi sorcerers." Norris continued. "The golden fruits are called the gold ginseng. Nurtured by the master of Black Tower. I had one once. It's very nourishing. Quite valuable stuff."

"It could be graded as something valuable, then the gold ginseng must be very nourishing then." Glenn rejoiced, but he was waiting for his comments on the relic with more dynamics.

Norris shook his head. "I don't know any...Based on what you've described, it shouldn't be a relic. Is it related to smeltery? I believe any relics would have been discovered by the master himself given the fact that his search has covered every inch of the tower. The relic laboratory might be just a makeshift one by some ancient sorcerers. Large-sized creatures are not a rarity. Several hundred meter long is really not a big deal."

Glenn opened his mouth yet said nothing. He was disappointed.

"The enormous laboratory, the tubes, skeletons and the marrow? How could it be a temporary one? A makeshift laboratory needed to be so luxurious?" Glenn thought. "And it's only a small part I've explored."

Glenn finally gathered himself when he remembered the last moments of seeing the view through the tube's crystal surface. He chickened out though when he sensed Norris scowling. It was just a feeling that Norris became mad, because his face was sewed-up and couldn't show any expressions.

"You idiot! Why are you divulging this information to me? If it is a relic that you found, then you'll own it. Share the information no more." Norris gave Glenn a lesson.

Astonishment crossed Glenn's face. Trusting anyone with such confidential information certainly wouldn't conform to certain rules.

He had perhaps treated Norris as Sam. That one particular

experience might have touched his heart string...

A loud buzzing sound from the matrix overhead broke out, followed by a strong activity of magical force. The air around became thicker and twisted. Finally someone appeared on the matrix.

"Bright Sword Ardas?" Glenn squinted.

Norris threw a glance at him. "Alright, you're the last one getting back. That officially ends the travel to the mirror."

Witnessing a president of the Black Issota, Ardas hurried to bow. He became bewildered as he noticed Glenn beside Norris and the fact that they seemed to be acquaintances. This close relationship, coupled with what Glenn had pulled off during the war, confounded Ardas, who wondered what exactly Glenn was capable of. He didn't ask about Glenn though. Instead he left after giving Glenn a brief look, albeit intense.

There were only Glenn and Norris again on the 99th floor of the Black Tower.

"Did you feel the power the tower possesses in that fleeting moment?" Norris turned around and started stepping out of the huge room.

A nod was the answer. He then replied in awe. "That power was unimaginable. It's like I was pulled into a sea of magical force and the natural laws began to change.

Norris said with a smile. "This power represents the insurmountable difference between a level-three sorcerer and a level-four sorcerer. Becoming a level-four will get you the extra power provided by a tower."

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Three days later Glenn visited Varro's private laboratory.

This is the first time Glenn set his foot in here. He couldn't help

but become curious and observe one after another the bizarre plants, fossils, bones, exotic decorations, strange creatures and other gadgets that were of little use judging by their looks. All of these items had one thing in common though—They were all labeled as From a Foreign World.

Varro was working crazily studying some biological samples brought by Glenn, while occasionally flipping through some old-looking books and notes. In the meantime, he kept murmuring things as if drunk.

Glenn did not try to disturb Varro's work. Varro specialized in studying creatures from foreign worlds. This way Glenn would save a lot of time to sort out, observe, recognize and to do experiments on them. He had his priority to learn certain skills from Norris, besides, he was also scheduled to research on the Fire Blast Sorcery.

Time was limited.

There was a compulsory mission for the students each year. Neither did Norris have any idea what Glenn had been working on privately nor did he care about his research. Therefore, it was very likely that the mission would involve him going far away.

In spite of that, Glenn wouldn't carry on the following mission as slow-paced as last time.

Currently having nothing to do, Glenn surveyed Varo's collections. He fixed his eyes on a ball of black liquid, his face revealing astonishment. The liquid ball swam in circles in the utensil constantly, lap after lap, as if they were never gonna get tired.

Glenn confirmed that it was something alive after he felt some faint life waves.

"It's such a world of wonder. The sorcerers have got a reason to explore the endless world, to strive for more knowledge..."

Varro strode to Glenn and saw him watching the black liquid. He then explained: "This is a low-level life from the foreign world of the Oblique Moon Shadow. It's a life made of elements. One wonderful thing about them is that they swim but only stick to the surface of the tank's floor. In their minds the world probably is a wrinkled piece of paper. And their food turns out to be lights. It's an amazing creature to our world."

Glenn smiled. In front of someone who had expertise in the study of creatures from foreign worlds, he wouldn't be shameless to brag. As it was said, "men are specialized in their particular major."

"Perhaps Varo is the sort of person Norris mentioned who will become a demon-hunting Ougi sorcerer. With a sudden inspiration or with a qualitative change in knowledge accumulation, there may be dramatic achievements to be obtained in one area. After all, the so-called Demon-hunters are, in general terms, a group of sorcerers whose sorcery is cultivated for combats."

"Glenn, these foreign world specimens you brought, two of them lack biological records, and after the observation on their life characteristics and mechanisms, I did not find anything special as well, their research value might not be obtained until the evolutionary contrast between them and the similar creatures in the sorcerer world are made."

Varo tagged the living creatures in Glenn's vials and categorized some of the material that Glenn collected and that the sorcerer world did not have. The rest were classified as valueless waste except for a jelly-like thing that was identified as a rare material for making binding agent.

Varo finally pointed to the extremely long iron wire worm on the table. "This Arminio parasite can grow this long?! No records about a parasite of such length. There must be mutation at work." Varo gazed. "According to a scroll I once read, the Arminio parasite has been living independently ever since the marrow heteromorphics went extinct. They used to live inside the

heteromorphics. This one's functions have encountered little changes and what matters to us is its misfortune string."

"Arminio parasite? Marrow heteromorphics?" Glenn's mouth widened. "Isn't this the iron wire worm? What the hell is the Arminio parasite? And Marrow heteromorphics?"

Varo scratched his head. "In this age, we call them the iron wire worm. Their name is the Arminio parasite as are called by ancient sorcerers. The scroll also said they're often used to be nurtured as symbiotic insects by some sorcerers." Varo continued. "The scroll said the Marrow heteromorphics could secrete marrows. A valuable material for smeltery. It's a high-grade creature and could grow very, very large."

"What? Are the skeletons in the tubes the Marrow heteromorphics?" Glenn became stupefied. "It's acceptable such huge creatures are used as parasites. But as symbiotics? What the hell...Is it a special strain nurtured by ancient sorcerers?"

Why would ancient sorcerers cultivate this sort of symbiotics inside this body? Could the clues be connected in some way?

Glenn shook his head and decided to put the questions on hold since he knew Varo couldn't give him the answers. The Holy Tower trial was more important. When he became strong enough and when time was more accommodating, he would delve into them then and the relic as well.

Glenn paid Varo for what he had provided and left with his samples.

Chapter 95: Forward-looking Wisdom

Magic lamps hung around the test table in Glenn's dormitory, leaving no shadow on the table.

Liquid reagents in the three test tubes all showed a dark green color, and when Glenn opened and sniffed them one by one, he could hardly conceal his disappointment. "Even when they're condensed into such concentration, the toxins are still not virulent enough! My body will become completely immune to them after the first use for my constitution-building."

Glenn breathed a sigh and threw a glance at the twig and the black/red mottle insects. He shook his head as he threw them into the waste trash.

"Don't be greedy. You only have a 108-point constitution and one practice using the venom will be quite helpful." With this in mind, Glenn collected the liquids in the three tubes for later use.

It should be noted that toxins to which Glenn is immune were very likely to be fatal to ordinary students.

After the intensive, meticulous experiment was complete, Glenn put out some of the magical lamps around the test table. The lights in the room dimmed, and Glenn rubbed his tired eyes for some time, but he did not delay further. He grabbed some Tjugealong stones from the other side of the table and ground them into fine powder, and then carefully sprinkled the powder into some excrement, which was produced by those green bats in the cave of that gigantic tree in the Black Tower mirror.

Glenn kneaded the dung into a ball, which was about a quarter of the size of a fingernail, and then he dripped a liquid onto it. The liquid was an extraction after a powdered, low-level life leaf reacted with the chemicals in a tube.

Once again Glenn carefully pinched the dung ball before he

smelled it. There was a rare odor of some sort of flower.

Glenn smiled and ran into a room next to his dorm.

He lit the magical lamps and for the next second, he did not turn his attention to see the small, live specimens of animals and plants in the room. Instead he went straight to a glass container completely covered with cloth, unveiled it and inside was a golden fruit who was in deep sleep and who was snoring. She was the Ginseng Glenn had stolen from the Black Mirror!

The Ginseng had grown twice the size compared to when she was picked from the tree crown, and her appearance had changed a little. However, the wound on her back from the hack seemed to have not been fully healed. Glenn believed the scar would stay with her forever.

"Bad guy, I'm full! Lylia is full! She can't take any more your food..." The Golden fruit had woken up and was staring at Glenn, who was showing excitement on his face. The sudden appearance of Glenn scared her into crying. It was a young girl's pure voice.

Glenn seemed unmoved. He assumed an amiable look as he set that carefully-made dung ball in front of the golden fruit. "Good girl... eat some more, and you'll grow faster."

Glenn tried his best to put on a harmless smile, the sort of smile that a father had while persuading his child to have his or her meal.

"Woo, woo...I do not wanna eat any more of that. Lylia is full..." The golden fruit cried again, and even more fiercely.

Glenn's face turned gloomy. He then said: "Really? Not even a bite? In that case, I'll use the syringes.."

Glenn once cut out some of her "pulp" for research and experiments and found that that method would hinder her development. Thus he would use the syringes to take out some of her body fluids.

The face of the golden fruit became pale upon hearing those threatening words.

She then picked up the food and put them into her mouth reluctantly, tears in her eyes, while glaring at Glenn.

"Woo...Lylia eats. Doesn't want needles. Woo..."

Glenn watched the Ginseng finish up her meal and fall asleep again. He then covered the container with cloth and left the room with new-found excitement.

After careful study, Glenn found that the fruits could greatly nourish the human body as Norris suggested. It should be noted that this kind of "nourishment" differed from the cruel exercise of resorting to toxins. About one twentieth of that Ginseng's pulp was taken, and his constitution had increased by one point.

Glenn dispelled his impulse to devour that little devil when he made the discovery in the first place. His wisdom in probing into knowledge discouraged him from being savage.

With subsequent in-depth studies, Glenn found something more; the fruits could repair cracks on the Life Code! Although the repairing effect was so negligible that it had to take about five or six hundred of such fruits to make significant mending, and they might be of no any use to ordinary students in this regard. But still, the find thrilled Glenn and helped him to refrain from swallowing it.

If eating Ginseng could help fix the cracks on Life Code, then when swallowing this kind of fruit in a large amount, was it possible the Glenn Secret Tri-Sorcery, the three chances to copy gifts from others, will evolve into "infinite number of spots to steal gifts"?

Of course, this process would necessarily entail the inevitable limitations of certain life rules. However, as long as the number of Ginsengs was sufficient, the birth of the fourth gift spot for Glenn

would be set in stone.

So, after thoughtful consideration, Glenn eventually gave up the idea of devouring the little girl, at least right before the Holy Tower Tryout.

The reasons were twofold.

First, Glenn must seize the opportunity to focus on the study of the Fire Blast Sorcery, which he had been working on for more than ten years, in order to try to achieve a leverage and obtain absolute dominance in the Tryout by obtaining a qualitative change in the lever-reinforced force.

If he ate the Ginseng, his constitution would see a great rise for sure, but he had to do physical exercises to improve his stamina, physiques, strength and other properties for his power to grow stronger. This would certainly hold him back in cultivating the Fire Blast Sorcery.

If Glenn succeeded in pulling off the Fire Blast Sorcery, according to his calculation, the assault power would be levered up to a minimum of 30 times of the raw power. In that case, the physical enhancement would be negligible. This was the fundamental reason why Glenn would sacrifice his insignificant interests and focus on the Fire Blast Sorcery.

Second, after having discovered the golden fruit's use to repair the cracked Life Code, he had been dwelling on the idea of creating a long-term plan—to cultivate a Ginseng orchard.

According to Glenn's estimate, four to five hundred Ginsengs will make his Life Code to be able to support a fourth gift and the mother tree in the Black Tower only had 70 to 80 golden fruits. That was a deficiency of around 400.

Moreover, the human body's adaptability to this type of nourishing supplements was strong and the effect for the second use would be greatly reduced, and the third or fourth use might

turn out to be negligible.

This was a wisdom called being forward-looking.

Thus, Glenn had been feeding the Fruit ever since she came here.

He now was in a good mood since he had reaped the harvest from the Black Tower Mirror, and for objects which were worth further study had also been preserved.

His life has once again become well-ordered, and he had the time to continue with the study of Fire Blast.

"After the preliminary calculation, 4,000 signs exist in the water element matrix and fire element matrix in my soul. There are basically 69 kinds of stable permutations of them. 12 kinds of simplified combinations of sign aggregates. Three basic element resonance points. In this case, when an extremely stable matrix of water and fire elements is built, the Fire Blast sorcery would be completed!" Glenn smiled. "This is powerful sorcery to activate the fire element using the destructive force, but still, it's an initial use of the destructive force."

There were less than three years before the Tryout started; Glenn had about two years left to fully crack the Fire Blast sorcery, removing the time that would be spent on the minutes.

Time was running out!

Glenn frowned. "Well, before the school's mandatory task is assigned, I'll try to learn the three things Norris prepared for me. The Endless Eye Regeneration sorcery, the three methods to become a sorcerer, and the trump card for the Tryout." With that in mind, Glenn left the room.

Chapter 96: The Mask of Truth

On the 79th floor of the Black Tower was where Norris's laboratory resided.

On the test table in front of Glenn were specimens of a foam frog and a phosphorus snake which belonged to Norris. They were actually kept in a magical ward where low temperature was ensured by consuming magical stones, and a mist of water filled the air. Beside the specimens laid a huge scroll.

A giant pair of human eyes were on the center of the scroll. The eyes were elaborately depicted with neural paths, vital sign reaction structures, element storage reactions, nerve electrolysis structures, lens, retinas, papillary refraction and so on.

Next to the human eyes were the drawings of a pair of foam frog eyes and a pair of phosphorus snake eyes. The pupils of the frog each contained a horizontal black line. Although the frog eyes had much more complicated neurons than human eyes had, the element variety seemed to be less; to be specific, they only had two main elements—thunder and light elements. It meant that foam frogs were born to be color blind and their visual sense toward the world was weak.

The pupils of the phosphorus snake, on the contrary, were two vertical lines, giving off a creepy image. The nerve electrolysis structure of the snake was quite primitive, with much less neural pathways than humans had. However, the snake's lens contained only ice elements while the retinas stored a thick layer of fire elements, which was strange.

Pointing to the two creatures, Norris said in a low and mysterious tone: "The secrets of the Endless Eye lie in them."

"Them?" Glenn became confused. "I suppose the biggest difference in perceiving the world between us and them is about colors. It's my understanding that they are both color blind."

Glenn knew that creatures perceived the world in different ways. Although some had eyes, they might be of no use.

Such as the Shade Butterfly Glenn caught in the Black Tower mirror, they perceived the world by recognizing the various smells in the air. The Three-Headed Dog had a highly-evolved nose that could sense the shape of a smell which human would have regarded as odorless. And Glenn's own Ashen Mask "viewed" the world via ultrasound.

As for the live, black creature in the tank of Varo's laboratory, God knows how they felt the world.

To talk about the visual perception of eyes, Robin's Green-Eyed Macaque definitely saw a different world from the other creatures. Lafite's Eagle Eye could observe things from a great long distance. The Dark Lord from a foreign world, as the creature called itself, which was once deceived by Glenn, saw the spiritual world, a discovery made by Glenn after his observation on his Greed Fire Giant; And the green-eyed student who Glenn ran into during his sneak into Section 19 could also see the world differently...

Thus, what made these two creatures special?

Norris smiled but didn't care to comment. He pointed to the eyes of the foam frog and said: "Their eyes! My tutor found out their secret and took advantage of that property himself. And he named his enhanced eye as the Limitless Eye."

"What is the enhancement?" Glenn was still confused.

"Dynamic vision!" Norris stopped smiling.

He motioned Glenn to have a look at the complex neurons and elements in the frog's eyes and said seriously: "Dynamic vision is an enhanced vision by which moving objects would slow down their motion and more detailed information would be thus caught visually. When trying to catch prey moving in high speed, the dynamic vision would be used to capture more of the target's

movements in the split of a second. My tutor's Limitless Eye simulates slow-motion and magnifies his vision to observe things. It's a powerful weapon against the sneaking predators. A very rare and precious visual ability."

Glenn opened his mouth in astonishment.

"The foam frogs? Such small creatures which were reduced into the bottom of the food chain, which he had dissected so many of, should have such a wondrous ability?"

Soon, he remembered an application of this vision—if he could use the dynamic vision to study the radium veins in the twig twice a day, he might learn a lot in a very short time.

With this in mind, he smiled in secret. "It's indeed a good idea, but perhaps I can't work out the vein thing before the Holy Tower Tryout."

Catching Glenn's reaction, Norris' sewed-up face showed a trace of pride. "My mentor is a great wizard, but your mentor is great, too! I found the secret in the phosphorus snake's eyes!"

Glenn felt a little amused by Norris complacent look, but he put on a face of admiration, eager to know the answer. "What is it?"

Seeing Glenn's flattering expression on his face, Norris raised his head and showed a vivid satisfaction, saying out loud. "Heat Radiation Vision! I enhanced the other eye and named it the Boundless Eye. That, plus my mentor's Limitless Eye now comprise the Endless Eye"

Glenn murmured with great surprise. "That's the origin of the Endless Eye now!"

Norris waved to the description of the snake's eyes on the scroll and said with pride and excitement. "See? These eyes are special in their lens, retinas and usual electrolysis structures. They're as delicate as art. With these natural structures, the snakes view the world by mapping the creatures giving off heat. Thus, my

Boundless Eye would capture everything with body temperatures!"

Glenn studied the special structures of the frog and the snake for a moment. Suddenly he asked. "Master, which parts of our body would adapt if one wants the Endless Eye?"

Norris' cat Garfield once said that the Endless Eye and the Repulsion and Attraction forces would transform a sorcerer's appearance and physical structure.

Norris smiled. "Relax. The side effects of having Endless Eye have been minimalized. It's nearly perfect. Except for the slight change in pupils, one more thing might change."

Glenn looked up and found about Norris' tongue which parted ways like a snake. He became shocked for some time. "Your tongue..."

"Exactly, the tongue. After my mentor and I had studied the neurons, the electrolytic structural reaction and the element allocation for a very long time, we eventually decided to have the tongue as the carrier of the Endless Eye," said Norris. He then flicked his tongue like a frog and rolled up a red fruit far away from him. He then chewed the fruit loudly. "Sometimes this tongue can work out magic. Many of the sorcerers want a tongue like mine, but nobody knew it had anything to do with the Endless Eye."

Glenn made a face.

Norris's manner of eating reminded him of Sorcerer Apollo's red-eyed frog. It ate the hateful butler in Zi Jue Residence back in Bi Seer City in the same way.

Having finished eating up the fruit, Norris spoke with pride. "Glenn, you are talented in some aspects, but human beings have only one pair of eyes. My mentor and I both agreed on the perfection of the Endless Eye transformation to human eyes. A supreme work. Even in the future when you have the chance to

become a Stigmata sorcerer or even a Necromancer, I don't think you can conduct more improvement easily in this regard. However, as your mentor, I still hope you can surpass me in some way. Here's a suggestion, try to work more on Hematology, grow more eyes. It might work. Haha..."

Norris was so proud that he became very excited. He finally had someone to show off his own accomplishment to besides his mentor.

As for the suggestion he made, Glenn could tell from his confident look that it would be a difficult road to embark on. Maybe one wouldn't be able to realize it in a lifetime.

Glenn hesitated for a moment and made up his mind to speak with an awkward look on his face. "Hmm...Master, the last time I was practicing the Repulsion and Attraction forces, I figured out a perfect solution to the possible side effects of body transformations."

Glenn put the Ashen Mask on the table.

Norris was confused for a few second and then he said with astonishment. "You're saying to use magical tools as carriers for the Endless Eye? It...sounds...far-fetched."

Glenn considered it for a while. He then shook his head and said firmly: "Since the ultrasonic function can be embedded in the Ashen Mask, why not the Endless Eye? If it do fail, there are only two possible reasons. One is poor handle of alchemy, the other poor understanding of the Endless Eye."

He then continued proudly. "I obtained the Heteromorphic Marrow, and I've decided my alchemy road should start from making a new legendary mask. I'd like to add all of the exploring enchantments into it!"

His ambitions surprised Norris, a level-three sorcerer.

"Put all of the exploring enchantments into a mask? A

legendary...?"

If over five of the exploring enchantments were contained in the mask, it would be indeed a legendary mask.

But still Norris thought Glenn became a little too conceited.

On one hand, Norris, as a sorcerer, was dissatisfied for his "low-class" student being so conceited. On the other hand, Norris thought Glenn was certainly far sighted than any other students. The majority of the students must be forging ahead by merely following the magic books step by step.

Norris made no comments but asked calmly. "So, this...legendary mask, how will you name it?"

Upon hearing his words, Glenn calmed himself down. He looked Norris in the eyes, catching sight of the dissatisfaction and expectation in them, saying. "Let's call it the Mask of Truth."

Chapter 97: Natural Force

The Endless Eye experiment program might be a subject of study throughout his life and naturally Glenn would not waste too much time researching this during this crucial period before the Tryout.

However, the knowledge of Endless Eye had to be learned.

More than four months had passed since Glenn began to learn about the basic knowledge of human eyes and some other methods of human exploring the world. During this time, Glenn's daily life had a regularity. In the mornings he would listen to Norris' instruction on the 79th floor of the Black Tower, and in the afternoons and evenings he would stay in his place to work on Fire Blast Sorcery, and occasionally, he would hang out with Robinson and Lafite for relaxation.

One day, Glenn arrived at Norris's lab as usual, but the huge scroll had been curled up.

Catching sight of Glenn's puzzled eyes, Norris said lightly: "Take it, I'll pass on this Endless Eye scroll as your mentor. When your Endless Eye experiment is complete, add the new discoveries into it and then pass it on to your disciples. I've taught you the basics of the Endless Eye, and now you'll have to experiment to prove how it actually works."

Glenn's face turned serious as he took over the heavy scroll respectfully with both of his slightly trembling hands. For the first time in the sorcerer world, he had a sense of responsibility and knowledge inheritance. Taking over the scroll seemed like a solemn, sacred ceremony where Glenn did not have any distractions.

Only through the inheritance of knowledge from generation to generation, would the sorcerer world become stronger and stronger. Those scrolls from ancient times were also precious carriers of knowledge which were complemented to perfection by

the later generations after their creation.

After having taken over the scroll, Glenn asked: "Mentor, what will I learn for today?"

"The three methods to become a sorcerer." Norris replied, emphasizing every word.

Excitement crossed Glenn's face. To advance to become a sorcerer was the dream of every student, but every so often only a few among the hundreds of them could realize it, while the vast majority died and was buried as years passed by.

A normal student would face the threat of death after three or four hundred years of growth, but upon advancement and becoming an official sorcerer, there would be a sublimation of life and their actions would no longer be restricted by physical decay. The soul would become the fundamental part of element sorcerers. In other words, before the advancement to a sorcerer, flesh supported the soul, and after the process was complete, the soul would become immortal. Flesh might decay but the body functions would remain at a normal level.

"What are the three methods to become a sorcerer?" Glenn asked nervously.

"Power, wisdom and luck." Norris said seriously. "Power is the factor that matters the most. If you can be the best in the Tryout, then you'll have access to a mystery of the sorcerer world. With it you'll assuredly become a sorcerer! Luck, or some would say fortune, plays the least part, or are even denied of existence. But sometimes the fathomless world would favor the most ordinary men."

Glenn didn't answer.

He had learned about that mystery of the Tryout, but the fact that it was categorized into the class of power saddened him.

Norris continued. "Anyway it would be a waste if not used. So it

might as well be given to the winner of the Tryout. This is a rule or special phenomenon of the sorcerer world."

Sadness on Glenn's face intensified before it was gone completely.

"Mentor, you said luck meant somebody was destined for something, something beyond control, then what about wisdom?"

Glenn had ruled out the possibility of relying on luck to become a sorcerer. He had a rational mind, as most of the sorcerers did, and thus wouldn't rest his future on something invisible and intangible.

"To use wisdom, you need to know what distinguishes a sorcerer from a student." Norris threw a glance at Glenn.

The next second Glenn felt that he was being winded up and squeezed by Natural Force and soon he had been encased by the force.

Glenn stayed cool because this was not the first time that he had been restrained by Natural Force. He knew that was a reason why higher-class sorcerers were at the upper hand.

Norris pulled out a crystal ball and instructed. "Attack it."

Glenn nodded and produced his Fire Bat. The bat hit the ball and flame scattered everywhere.

Glenn put out the Inextinguishable Flame and read the crystal ball. "39 points of assault? My battle strength has been diminished to only five times of the basic assault power!"

But still Glenn didn't activate his Body of Flame, otherwise the attack degree would certainly be much higher.

Norris put away the ball and said to Glenn. "This is how things should be. If it was a Stigmata sorcerer who pulled off the Natural Force, you wouldn't be able to produce your Fire Bat at all. Of course if it were a lower level of sorcerer who restrained you, your

attack would be stronger. This is about the control over Natural Force. The difference between a sorcerer and a student."

"The control over Natural Force? What do we students use to pull off sorceries?"

Norris shook his head. "The sorceries you students were cultivating were just an initial application of the Natural Force in the sorcerer world exploited by the ancient sorcerers. One worked with his or her magical force as the source of power, and pried into the laws of the Natural Force by using the Magic Matrix as the lever. The Magic Matrix was created by making use of the Natural Force in the sorcerer world and if you're in a foreign world that is so different from ours, the students might not be able to carry out the simplest sorcery."

Glenn became stunned. He remembered the time when he was almost frozen back in the mirror.

"Perhaps, I was frozen because I was in a fragment that kind of belonged to the sorcerer world. If I were in a foreign world, it's very likely that I wouldn't be able to pull off sorceries."

Norris continued. "Sorcerers' obtain their power from the Natural Force, driven by the Magical Force, and with himself or herself being the lever, to pry into the rules of the world. This way, once sorcerers diminish a student using the Natural Force, he or she wouldn't stand a chance to win no matter how strong he or she is."

Glenn became enlightened.

Students were just people created by ancient sorcerers using their wisdom to serve as a transition to become real sorcerers. They were only able to achieve something locally.

To sum up, students explore into and use the Natural Force while sorcerers control it.

Seeing Glenn was thinking, Norris proceeded. "So a student has

to use wisdom to observe the Natural Force and see how the matrix reacts, and to feel the nature using your soul. This is a sure path for Bright Sorcerers, but many of the Dark sorcerers fail, and this is one of the reasons why the former outnumbers the latter."

Glenn robbed his brows and asked. "How to feel the Natural Force?"

What Glenn could think of about Natural Force was when he was in the First-years Trial at the mirror dropping place. He was warned by some sorcerer right before he was entering the reward house. He didn't know a thing about how to feel, not to mention how to gain insights.

"It's a tough, uncertain road for me to use wisdom to become a sorcerer."

Norris guessed out what was in Glenn's mind and said. "Power, wisdom and luck was what holding the sorcerer civilization back. The three factors were hard to attain and use to become a sorcerer, which will restrict the civilization from developing limitlessly. "

Glenn defined the evolution using the above-mentioned methods as active evolution and the constitution-building sorcerers and most of the foreign world creatures were defined as passive evolution.

One disadvantage about active evolution was like the phenomenon that there were extremely powerful creatures in a certain foreign world which would hunt, kill and thus reduce the total population.

However, the ancient sorcerers had been using their wit to break this restriction. That was why students were "created".

Norris continued. "Glenn, when you become a sorcerer some day and you still intend to go on the road of body-strengthening, I'd suggest you stop cultivating your mental strength at the cost of consuming your body. I know this method will help you reinforce

your mental strength in a shorter time, but it won't do anything in the long term. And your body will stay old by then. Or you can even weaken your mental strength and use the spared strength to nourish your body, and then you can meditate to replenish the lost mental strength." Norris looked at Glenn. "But remember, when a student becomes a sorcerer, the body functions and soul will be communicating without blockage and at that very moment, those two properties become interchangeable."

Glenn gulped and then nodded. "I see."

No wonder many sorcerers looked all aged. That was because they chose to strengthen their mental strength at the cost of degenerating their body functions. And many of them lost interest in improving their body since body and flesh were no longer a factor determining one's longevity.

Norris's speech was to remind Glenn of that so that he would not make the wrong choice when the day came.

Chapter 98: The Bloodlust Puppet

Glenn got back to Norris' laboratory seven days later.

"The Bloodlust Puppet?" Glenn listened attentively to Norris who was introducing the new sorcery.

The Puppet reminded Glenn of the students back on the ship who could pull strings to control a puppet and kill.

In retrospect, Glenn believed that the reason that student got killed without an apparent reason was probably that some student in the group desired the magical tool which could conjure up the puppet. The incident caused a stir back then since the puppet girl was known for her ruthless character.

Norris laughed. "That's right. The Bloodlust Puppet. Here is some of the materials needed to make the Puppet. What's more, there is the short-distance Teleporter coordinates, and a few radioactive stones. Use your special blood to manufacture a Puppet and it'll become immortal. At least against students. The production involves Occult, energy conservatism, and "Soulogy", which I'm sure is beyond the comprehension of any ordinary student. But you can. Once you encounter a stronger enemy during the Tryout, escape by using the Teleporter coordinates, and send the Puppet to chase the attacker, and make sure the Puppet carries the radioactive stones..."

Glenn took over the materials. "No wonder Norris was so sure about my prospects of becoming a Demon-Hunting Sorcerer. The Puppet and the stones wouldn't even be eclipsed by Sam's poison beast in terms of attack power. Besides, I must be strong back then in his opinion."

However, the objects had to be stored sound and safe, and if they were lost, Glenn would then be held accountable. Besides, it would also reduce the power of this way of attack.

Glenn had tasted the sweetness of studying under a master. Wasn't it a truth that the seven Desperators crushed all of the students who dared to stand in their way, and wasn't it largely due to the fact that they had masters? And privately the schools had asked the seven of them to kill less than 100 students to maintain the balance between the students...

He seemed to have become a Desperator of the Tryout or even a Desperator of the Desperators.

The Bloodlust Puppet sorcery wouldn't be instructed by Norris himself. He was just offering Glenn the scroll because he didn't cultivate the sorcery. The puppet was immortal against students but they couldn't pose a threat to sorcerers.

The scroll was titled Occultism and Energy Conservation—The Bloodlust Puppet. This sorcery would be studied on a temporary basis to guarantee Glenn not be killed tragically.

Occult was not a systematic knowledge itself which made the achievement of the practitioners uncertain. Thus a student as rational as Glenn wouldn't fall deeply into its study.

Glenn performed the bow courtesy, left the laboratory and started collecting the crucial materials.

The first raw material was three litres of the practitioner's special blood. Glenn's blood contained toxins so it met this pre-requirement.

The second was a high-rise dais to perform the cursing. The higher grade the dais was, the more times the puppet could be reborn. The dais seemed to be a way of gleaning and transferring a certain kind of energy. Glenn believed that if Norris agreed to take him to the highest floor of the Black Tower, he could use the classiest dais of the school.

The rest would be some weird stuff he had to get himself.

"Three litres of the practitioner's blood...then it must be drained

for multiple times. I may need to make some medicine for blood regeneration and metabolism acceleration." Glenn signed. "And Varo must have the weird stuff on sale."

Varo's display cabinets had at least doubled in numbers and half of them were selling Glenn's invention—the Love Vial. Many of the students would save up for some time and buy one as a luxury, and he had caught the smell when students, male and female, passed by.

Beside Varo, there were two more people working behind the cashier desk. Two helping hands he recruited from the school's newly enrolled students.

"Wow, it's Glenn." Varo got off the chair swiftly upon seeing Glenn, the flab in his belly wobbling. The excessive granulation tissue on his face made his small eyes smaller. His size reminded Glenn of Bethany whose figure was a ball. But that cruel, serious woman didn't have the excess fat.

Glenn smiled back. He had obtained a huge amount of magical stones from this partner and he also knew that Varo was well-connected in the Holy Tower.

Despite the fact that Varo was helping Glenn by starting a partnership, the possibility that the people behind Varo had wanted Glenn dead in the First-years Trial couldn't be ruled out. This way, they could have raked in the whole profits from the sale of Love Vials. What was worse, the Pact of Seven Rings was signed by Glenn and an organization named Hanadaikon. Glenn would die several hundred years later while the other signer might far outlive Glenn.

However, so many years had passed and now Glenn had Norris as his mentor, he wouldn't care about the little "tricks" at all.

After the brief greeting, Glenn uttered the whole idea of the puppet. "The cost can be deducted from my share of proceedings this month."

Varo nodded. "That's wonderful."

"Yuri," Varo turned his head back. "Take this customer to the warehouse. Give whatever he wants."

Yuri was arranging the objects in the closet. She seemed to be afraid of Varo and upon the order, she replied yes in a low voice before she turned her yellow eyes at Glenn.

Yuri had noticed the arrival of this special customer. She had not seen the greedy, evil Varo this ingratiating even when the buyer was a sorcerer. But it was not the case for Glenn.

Since Glenn's name was not on the Top Ten and not the Promising Students until very recently, she then became sure that Glenn was rich.

Soon Yuri had led Glenn to the warehouse. It was quiet and dim. An assortment of objects lay everywhere.

"One live Crow Chicken, No, make it two. 200 tongues of crows, 50 grams of corpse marrow, one kilo of rotten earth, 300 grams of shark's bile, two White Fruits.

Minutes later, Yuri had put all of the asked materials before Glenn, and was double-checking to make sure there was nothing wrong.

Yuri gasped. The exertion of her efforts had made her breath heavier. She fanned herself using her hand, trying to make herself comfortable. Her brown yellow hair was brushed off with it. Sweat soaked her blouse around the collar and the blouse sank downwards along with her skin, revealing her pure white cleavage.

Yuri's sultry eyes didn't fail in catching Glenn's attention. She was pretty and something delicate seemed to be sparking between them.

Yuri bit her wet lips lightly and said in a voice as if it was coming from her throat. "100 magical stones, and I'll be yours." She nudged her body towards Glenn as she continued talking, and a light floral

fragrance diffused in the air. It was the Love Vial.

Glenn shook his head as if he was bored by this girl.

Glenn's End Sound dagger came at Yuri's chest, and then he threatened. "Haven't you the newcomers tasted the bitterness of the cursing sorceries? How dare you come so near to me so readily? Not afraid your information has been taken?"

Yuri's face became pale. She could tell from the calm voice that she had messed with someone tough.

Glenn retracted his dagger and said. "I've been meaning to say that your poor handle of water elements made you look stupid. Besides, your investment, the Love Vial, will be futile on me. Behave yourself and send the materials to this address."

Yuri nodded hurriedly without uttering another word. She gathered all of Glenn's stuff and left the warehouse.

Glenn would not be distracted by such trivialities. Many of Glenn's schoolmates did such flirty things at their time even though they didn't use the perfume, and the humble Glenn was not an object of their interest.

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Glenn had collected two liters of his blood from his daily extractions and put them in the freezer. He would have the three minimum liters for making the puppet in a month.

But today he had another special task. He arrived at the cage which locked up the two Crow Chickens. The food Glenn fed them was: Blood Crow tongue mixed with corpse marrow; shark bile blended with rotten earth and urine from Brown pigs.

For the past two months the two chicks had been feeding on 1-2 Blood Crows mixed with corpse marrow and now they had evolved to the Jinx Crow Chicken described in the Occultism and Energy Conservation—The Bloodlust Puppet

He went on to coat the two Jinx Crow Chicken with rotten earth which were mixed with various weird materials.

As the packaging work was done, he threw the fluttering, crowing chicks into a huge ware. And a meat hammer fell down on them.

Deplorable chuckles filled the air while Glenn kept lifting and letting the hammer falling down for several times until the chicks were minced.

The minced meat was what were described as the Jinx Flesh.

Glenn spent an hour picking up the essence of the meat and went on to prepare for other materials which had to be collected by strictly following the steps.

Half a month later, Glenn arrived at a dais on the 95th floor of the Black Isotta. He threw a glance at Norris while sitting on the center of the dais. "It's done."

# Chapter 99: The Unusual Mission

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On the way to the entrance of Black Isotta which faced Bramble Forest, Glenn had been thinking about the school's compulsory task assigned by Norris twice a year.

"The destination of this task is on the border of Black Isotta and the School of Compass, where a magical stone vein is located. Although the vein produces 1 million low class magical stones annually, the production is only equal to 100 high-grade magical stones. That's not an amount that could change the big picture. It's, therefore, a task for students. Norris asked me to do it just because travel to the place is long enough. "

"As for the rewards, we need to earn 50% of the magical stone production for Black Isotta and once we did it, the five students involved in the task will get 1,000 magical stones as reward. If Black Isotta gets more than 60%, the student who submits the Pact will receive the extra share over the 60% of the yearly production! "

When Glenn finally arrived at the entrance, the rest of the other four had been there waiting for him. He hadn't meant to be late. Norris had taken him to the 100th floor of Black Tower to draft the pact.

"Glenn?" said a girl.

Glenn threw a look at her in surprise. The girl had brown skin, wore short, black hair and had long eyelashes. Her eyes were bright with passion and she looked as agile as a leopard. She was Liona, the one who used to deliver meals to Glenn and Garfield in Norris' Laboratory.

"This is great. I didn't expect you to be the team leader, I think we can get the task done easily then." She became excited as she put her arm around Glenn's neck as if they were great "buddies".

The intimacy was because there had been a time when they had

grown close to each other.

Liona knew that Glenn was Norris's favorite student. This meant a lot. Norris was a president of the school. As the student Norris had chosen, Glenn must have something special in him. Besides, as far as she knew, Glenn was crazy about studying warfare sorceries.

The sultry behavior "dissolved" Glenn's wilderness, toughness and mystery. The other three students who didn't know Glenn showed a face of astonishment.

"The school appointed him as the leader of this task?"

One of them was a student who wore a golden braid. She must have spent much time in having it delicately woven and it showed the fact that she cared for her hair very much.

She asked: "Glenn... You knew him, Liona? How come I've never heard of him?"

It seemed that she was quite confident in her knowledge of people as good as her or better than her.

Liona didn't reply and kept her arms around Glenn's neck. It was unwise to talk about Norris' favored student.

"I don't know why the school chose you to be the leader, a student who hasn't even been on the school's Promising Students list, but I guess there must be a reason. Your name is Glenn, right? I accept you as the leader, but don't let us down," said a student who spoke with a harsh voice. Most parts of his body and face were covered by a large robe. A string of weird, green beads hung around his neck.

His name was Dida. He was ranked on the top of the Promising Students of Black Isotta, meaning he had the potential to climb his way onto the top ten list.

The last one of the three also wore a loose robe. He had golden hair, a pair of hawk-eyes and a heavy golden beard. A string of seven or eight scrolls hung on his waist. He walked with a crutch,



the top of which gave off blue and yellow lights.

"You're Ashen Mask on the hunted list? Glenn...Oh, yes, the Ashen Mask Glenn!" he said in amazement after finally remembering.

Hearing that Glenn was on the hunted list, the other people looked at each other and all took out a brochure to confirm Glenn's identification. They were not trying to take Glenn down to get the bounty for Glenn's head, but wanted to make sure of his qualification to lead them.

In some ways, being on the hunted list meant power.

Glenn snorted as he threw a glance at the lists in their hands but his face revealed no emotion.

After having confirmed Glenn's identification, Dida said coldly: "It seems that you're more than qualified to be the leader."

The golden braid girl studied Glenn for a moment and said softly: "Our task is to persuade the Marquis Zalm to re-take his side and re-allocate the magical stone vein that he's in charge. We want a 50% share or even higher."

Liona looked at Glenn and smiled. "Glenn, tell us, how should we finish the task? You're the one with the Pact. We'll do as told. "

The golden hair student with the several scrolls said: "But we can't enrage the Marquis. He is a linear descendant of two sorcerers, and he has a strong guard—a legendary knight transformed by a sorcerer. We might not even be a match for him." He turned to Glenn.

Glenn was wearing his metal armor and his Ashen Mask, with his Nine-headed Snake Sword on his back. He had been listening to their discussion silently upon arrival.

Seeing all of them turning their attention to him, Glenn tossed off Liona's arms before he squatted and rolled out a map on the ground.

He pointed to the destination and said: "It takes at least one month to get here from our school on foot, and one and a half months for students of the Sorcerer School of Compass. In general, we'll need at least three months to finish this task. It is a long term mission."

The others nodded and waited for his arrangement.

Glenn looked around and evaluated their abilities. He then shook his head in disappointment. It seemed that Norris had assuredly underestimated his ability.

"But that gives me a chance to do it solo. This way I can complete the task faster and thus earn more time to study the Fire Blast Enchantment. I don't have to waste all of my time in this task." Thought Glenn.

With that in mind, he pointed at a necessary path from Sorcerer School of Compass to the place, took back his map, and said emotionlessly: "I'm sorry, but I have to finish the study of an enchantment before the Holy Tower Tryout. That's why I'm not gonna finish this boring task at such a slow pace. Instead I'll do this alone. I'll fly there and sign a pact with the students from the Compass. In this way, the task can be done within a month."

He said the words without any intention of asking permission.

With enough power, a student would not at all care for the feelings of others whose power was below him. The attitude was adopted without any particular purpose. A powerful student didn't have to stay low-key. It was foolish. Deterrence saves trouble for the student who owns it.

Of course, pushing the line too far, like killing people for keeping secrets would not be advised.

Therefore, Glenn didn't admit the killing of Thunder Axe Gade. Though the announcement would earn him reputation in a short time, but it would hurt him in the longer term. It bred hatred and

raised wariness against him.

And if it was not for the fact that it was so urgent for him to study Fire Blast, he wouldn't choose to finish the task all by his own. After all, the task would be easier with more helpers. Moreover, before he leveled up, it was better to cooperate with teammates and the travel itself would really help him in improving his physical attributes.

But this was an exceptional case, so he had to make an off-hand plan.

The other four students, including Liona, became shocked. Even the cold Dida doubted what he had heard. "Are you sure about this?"

Glenn glanced at Dida.

"The Tryout will begin in two years. I have to finish that sorcery ASAP. So this is it." Glenn replied seriously and firmly.

The braid girl frowned. "The two schools' pickings are supposed to be a match. You sure you wanna take on a team by yourself? According to the procedures, we need to have the support of the Marquis before we..."

Glenn shook his head and interrupted her impatiently. "Like I said, I am in a hurry!"

Even though Liona had faith in Glenn, she hesitated. "If you're going alone, what should we do then? If the mission failed..."

"If the mission fails, I'll take full responsibility. You don't have to worry about that. And I will compensate you the 1,000-stone reward personally. But since I'm the leader and in charge of the Pact, so if I finish the task, I'll take all of the extra rewards." Glenn looked around them seriously.

In the next moment, he had flown at full speed toward the Bramble Forest, regardless of others' reactions.

He continuously supplemented his magical strength by consuming magical stones and flew as fast as he could to an opening of a valley under the jurisdiction of the Compass. It was on the edge of the Bramble Forest which was in the control of Black Isotta. It was a necessary path for the competing students to pass if on foot, because most of them couldn't fly.

Soon, he had become a black spot in the eyes of the students on the ground and disappeared.

# Chapter 100: Pact-Signing Went Awry

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Glenn kept on flying for seven days.

On the eighth day as he was flying away from Bramble Forest, ten crows besieged him, attacking him with wind blades and petrifying lights (lights that could peg down the ones attacked.)

The crows had three eyes and the third one was worth studying for their ability to petrify living things. If it was not for the fact that Glenn was on a mission, he would engage and capture some for their eyes.

Instead, he dodged, steered away from them and headed towards the destination. Temporary interests must be sacrificed for the greater purpose.

The crows stopped their hunt after having lost their target.

Another seven days had elapsed. Coming into sight was the Full Autumn range, which had the similar height as the small hills alongside the coastal line of the Black Isotta. The mountain was not a problem and held no strategic importance for sorcerers who could just fly through. But it was important for many of the students because most of the students couldn't fly, and they needed to get across the A Strip of Sky—mouth of the mountain if their destination was beyond the Range.

On the ground was a five member team with the leader being a girl riding on a unicorn. Her face was decorated with a black pattern, a patch over her eye and a dark blue earring dangling on her ears. She wore a dark cloak which accentuated the mysterious aura she had.

She looked out at the One Strip of Sky. "We're gonna climb onto the Full Autumn range. We'll be out of the Compass territory once we get across, and by then we can reach the destination in a month."

The one in the rear of the team was a two-meter tall man. He had broad shoulders and his body was coated in full armor, with a huge sword and a basket containing carrots on his back. The way he spoke and acted was quite awkward.

"Hey, Mysterious, what team do you think the Black Isotta would send to contact a strong team like us?"

A boy who was riding an enormous leaf looked back at the giant. A strain of weed was in between his teeth. "There're great students down there these years. I witnessed a student called Bethany going crazy and committing something horrible during the war between the schools. Don't underestimate their strength."

"I think you're the best, Okayama!" A voice belonging to a little girl arrived. Just then a girl stuck out her head from the basket the giant was carrying, and the next second she had withdrawn after she heard an instruction of "get back inside".

The one who gave that order was a gloomy looking male student who had a brown crutch. The strange thing about him was that he had no pupils in his eyes. Instead, a double, black helix was in each of his eyes.

"Got it." The girl in the basket wailed.

The team seemed to have developed a special bond between them after a long time fighting together. And they knew the codes during fighting. In short, it seemed to be a better team than Glenn's.

Mysterious replied. "I've been dealing with the Black Isotta for many years. Believe me, I know how to handle them. I'll act as circumstances dictate. If their signer is a tough one, I'll compromise and sign a parity pact, or I'll just kill him or her if the signer is a wuss." She licked her lips after she finished talking.

"Ho, the magnificent Mysterious!" The little girl in the basket yelled, with both of her hands motioning in the air.

The team went on and on, and the One Strip of Sky came into sight.

What also came in sight was a fully-armored man sitting before them.

The team became shocked. "Why would a man sit here for a rest?" But they did not intend to pull up. They thought the man was one of their students——someone from the Compass. They approached the Mouth.

As they approached, the stranger looked up and stood with his big sword, his eyes beneath the Ashen Mask staring at the team.

Mysterious scowled, and became cautious. "I've never seen him in the Compass." She motioned the team to stop 20 meters away from the stranger, and asked. "Who're you? Why are you here? I've never met you in the Compass."

The masked man swept a glance at the team and said: "One, two, three, four, five. Five! You're going to Dexter then?"

"How did you know?" The dumb giant asked, followed by a volley of angry glances cast by the other three. Even the girl in the basket kicked him in the back. That let him know that he had been too rash in divulging the purpose of their travel.

The little giant shut his mouth up.

The man in the mask nodded, and then appeared right in front of the group in a second. The men motioned to defend themselves.

Magical waves spread as if there was going to be a battle.

Surprisingly, the man took out a paper and said to the team. "Sign this parity pact and this mission is accomplished. Do it quickly. I'm in a hurry."

The pattern in Mysterious' face started moving. This sorcery was similar to Alastair's. it should be an outburst of the concentration of magical force after a long time.

"Who are you?" The girl asked for the second time. "You're not on the top ten or whatever list. What made you think we would sign the pact with you?"

Glenn stared back. "Don't you want a pact? And how would you like me to prove my identity?"

The girl smiled, and waved her hand backwards. "I could see you're a constitution-building student so why don't you show your skills with him before we even talk about the pact? And you might be spared the trouble of going back at all."

Mysterious was not in the intention of signing a pact with someone whose background was unclear. She had to obtain something useful, such as an evaluation on this man's power.

It would be an advantage to obtain information of such a powerful opponent whose background was such a blur before the Tryout, during which time she should steer clear of him.

"Hoho..." The giant shouted as he charged at Glenn like a rhinoceros. Thick earth elements started diffuse in the air. His skin turned into armor as he accelerated as the ground shook.

A sword came at Glenn's neck with great force.

Glenn squinted as he fended off the giant with his sword.

Boom. A buzzing sound of metal against metal was heard.

The ground at Glenn's feet trembled, but he didn't move backwards at all.

The next second the sword in the giant's hand had been flung away, and his hand was covered in blood after the earth element had been dispersed. The giant couldn't stop until he moved seven or eight steps backwards.

"Such a loser?"

Glenn kicked the ground at his feet and launched a charge at the giant. He slashed at it.



However, he missed. The giant had been pulled back by some unknown force and his body had turned into green-colored, thin strands when he was drawn back.

"Enough!" Mysterious thundered. She was sure that she saw a real giant the moment her "giant" engaged with Glenn. It didn't exert much effort and her beast that she was proud of had been pushed back meters away. Her little giant was no match for Glenn at all.

Cold sweat appeared on her back. She stared at Glenn as if he was a kind of beast.

"He'd be a real competitor in the Tryout, someone in the dark." The Mysterious thought. She was very sure of her evaluation. "Since I've got the 'information', there's no need to antagonize him. I wouldn't benefit from fighting him."

She then said lightly. "That's good. You've got yourself recognized. Now let's talk about the pact."

"Recognized? Pact?" Glenn shook his head. "Since you initiated the attack, then you're not in a position to say anything about the pact." He appeared in front of the team. "On behalf of the Black Isotta, we're not going to sign a pact, instead we'll have a war."

# Table of Contents

## [A Sorcerer's Journey](#)

[Synopsis](#)

[Copyright](#)

[Chapter 1: The World of Sorcerers](#)

[Chapter 2: A Sorcerer](#)

[Chapter 3: Weird Things Happened At The Governor's Residence](#)

[Chapter 4: The Beauty Clam](#)

[Chapter 5: Knowledge](#)

[Chapter 6: At The Krakatoa Harbor](#)

[Chapter 7: The Dark Wells](#)

[Chapter 8: A Tussle Over The Ship's Cabin](#)

[Chapter 9: So-Called Rules](#)

[Chapter 10: The Magical Stones](#)

[Chapter 11: A Disaster At Sea](#)

[Chapter 12: A Little Romance](#)

[Chapter 13: The Sorcerer's Sorcery](#)

[Chapter 14: An Unwanted Visitor](#)

[Chapter 15: A Harsh Rule](#)

[Chapter 16: The Weak Get Eliminated](#)

[Chapter 17: The Death Sail League](#)

[Chapter 18: Arrival At The Black Isotta School Of Sorcery](#)

[Chapter 19: The Black Tower](#)

[Chapter 20: Establishing Turf](#)

[Chapter 21: The Fulcrum](#)

[Chapter 22: Two Years In The School](#)

[Chapter 23: Glenn's Aphrodisiacs](#)

[Chapter 24: Go With The Gadfly](#)

[Chapter 25: The Element Matrix](#)

[Chapter 26: The Life Code](#)

[Chapter 27: A Variety Of Gadgets](#)

[Chapter 28: A Mask](#)

[Chapter 29: A Gathering Held By Black Sail League](#)

[Chapter 30: Thunder Stolen](#)

[Chapter 31: A Rare Symbol Found](#)

[Chapter 32: Right Before The First-Years Sorcery Test](#)

[Chapter 33: Glenn Killed Two](#)

[Chapter 34: The Hunting Continued](#)

[Chapter 35: In Front Of The House Where The Mirror Is Hidden](#)

[Chapter 36: Warning From A Purported Sorcerer](#)

[Chapter 37: Being Despised](#)

[Chapter 38: Nina Was Mired](#)

[Chapter 39: The Love Dialogue](#)

[Chapter 40: Glenn's Team Reunited](#)

[Chapter 41: Belle](#)

[Chapter 42: The Virtual Helminth](#)

[Chapter 43: Glenn Got The Bead](#)

[Chapter 44: The Seven Desperaters Gathered](#)

[Chapter 45: A Potential Desperater](#)

[Chapter 46: The Column of Fire and the Waterspout](#)

[Chapter 47: The Chase](#)

[Chapter 48: New Owner of the Prize](#)

[Chapter 49: Interrogation](#)

[Chapter 50: Sorcerer Norris](#)

[Chapter 51: Promotion](#)

[Chapter 52: Passive Evolution](#)

[Chapter 53: The Water Tower](#)

[Chapter 54: The Water Tower II](#)

[Chapter 55: The Sorcerer Tower](#)

[Chapter 56: Lymph](#)

[Chapter 57: Second Stage Evolution](#)

[Chapter 58: Sytematic](#)

[Chapter 59: Ancient Memory](#)

[Chapter 60: The Glenn Dissimilation Sorcery](#)

[Chapter 61: The Glenn Secret Tri-Sorcery](#)

[Chapter 62: The Demon-Hunting Mission](#)

[Chapter 63: Hunting Down](#)

[Chapter 64: Stray Knights](#)

[Chapter 65: A Black Sorcerer](#)

[Chapter 66: Weirdness](#)

[Chapter 67: The Devil Lord](#)

[Chapter 68: A Hoax](#)

[Chapter 69: The Legal Enforcement Team](#)

[Chapter 70: The Purple Key](#)

[Chapter 71: The Repulsive and Gravitational Forces Sorcery](#)

[Chapter 72: The Guardian](#)

[Chapter 73: Declaring War](#)

[Chapter 74: The Final Preparation](#)

[Chapter 75: Evil Eye Kasmira](#)

[Chapter 76: The Traces of Stigmata Valley](#)

[Chapter 77: Bright Sorcerer and Dark Sorcerer](#)

[Chapter 78: "The Seamen Group"](#)

[Chapter 79: The Mad Woman](#)

[Chapter 80: True Pride](#)

[Chapter 81: The Greedy Flame Giant](#)

[Chapter 82: The Crater](#)

[Chapter 83: The Proposal for Unity](#)

[Chapter 84: Badge Collecting](#)

[Chapter 85: The Heart of a “Black Sorcerer”](#)

[Chapter 86: Feeding on Hatred](#)

[Chapter 87: The Death of Gade](#)

[Chapter 88: Loss](#)

[Chapter 89: Twenty-Eight Jurisdictions](#)

[Chapter 90: Intoxication of an Old Witch](#)

[Chapter 91: Black Mirror \(I\)](#)

[Chapter 92: Black Mirror \(II\)](#)

[Chapter 93: Black Mirror \(III\)](#)

[Chapter 94: The Arminio Parasite](#)

[Chapter 95: Forward-looking Wisdom](#)

[Chapter 96: The Mask of Truth](#)

[Chapter 97: Natural Force](#)

[Chapter 98: The Bloodlust Puppet](#)

[Chapter 99: The Unusual Mission](#)

[Chapter 100: Pact-Signing Went Awry](#)